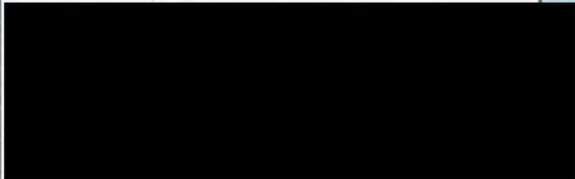


Once you have completed your feedback, please email to regionalplan@gw.govt.nz

Please enter your details below	
* Submitter Name: Full name, or Name of Organisation / Company	Heather Phillips
Contact person for submission: (If different to above)	
Telephone no: (Not required)	
* Address for service: (Email, or physical address) Please note, an <u>email address</u> is the preferred method	heather@moonlightfarm.co.nz
* I wish to be heard in support of my submission at a hearing	Yes
* I would consider presenting a joint case at the hearing with others who make a similar submission	No
* I could gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission	No
Only answer this question if you answered 'yes' to the above question. I am directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission that: A) adversely affects the environment; and B) does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition	
In providing a submission to Greater Wellington, I agree to having read and understood the terms and procees outlined in this Information Statement	
If providing a submission on behalf of a company / organisation I confirm that I have authority to do so:	
Date:	14-Dec-23
Please enter your feedback in the next worksheet "2) Feedback on Provisions". All of the provisions in the proposed change have been included so please place your comments in the correponding cells. If you have questions on how to use this submission form please visit our Submitter User Help Guide or email one of our friendly team at regionalplan@gw.govt.nz	

Submission by Heather Phillips, 930 Moonshine Road, Judgeford, RD1 Porirua 5381

(My property sheds waters to Te Whanganui a Tara/Wellington Harbour and Te Awarua-o-Porirua/Pāuatahanui Inlet)
to Greater Wellington Regional Council Proposed Plan Change 1 - Dated 14 December 2023

INTRODUCTION: Myself, Donald and my family have for many decades actively encouraged regeneration of large tracts of our farm. We all have fenced, cut weeds and caught pests. We have even controlled many weeds on road reserve lands, to stop egress from same onto our native bush regeneration, a total ongoing battle. At times GWRC has been helpful with grants for fencing but at other times GWRC has been a complete obstruction in achieving any realistic pest control measures. I still pick up public rubbish from the road and Moonshine Stream that appear all too regularly. We as a family still undertake weed control but more and more weeds arriving in larger volumes, both by water and air (and possibly by pests spreading seeds). I am managing/developing the remaining farm paddocks in such a way that hopefully they will form partial fire breaks.

**WHOLE SECTIONS APPEAR TO BE MISSING FROM THE PLAN:
I cannot attach these to sections in the plan as they don't exist.**

1. Wildfires cause erosion – sediment loss

With the potential for wildfires increasing with climate change.

No mitigation/planning/prevention of wildfires - all absent from this plan.

Scion has estimated that the annual average direct effect of rural fire on New Zealand's economy is around \$67 million, with indirect losses estimated to be at least two to three times the direct cost. Additional losses from effects on natural capital such as erosion, **waterway sedimentation** and loss of carbon can be as high as 30 to 60 times the direct losses.

<https://www.nzffa.org.nz/farm-forestry-model/resource-centre/tree-grower-articles/may-2016/scion-rural-fire-research-group-understanding-extreme-fire-behaviour/>

Severe fire days are likely to increase:

..... Modelling of potential future changes in fire danger with hotter, drier and windier conditions caused by climate change shows that the number of severe fire weather days is likely to increase around the country by an average of 70 per cent by 2040. The most marked relative changes are for **Wellington** and coastal Otago, where the number of severe fire weather days is **likely to double to around 30**, and triple to 20, per year respectively.

https://www.scionresearch.com/data/assets/pdf_file/0014/66020/Scion-Connections-Issue31.pdf

Wildfires can cause flooding (*sediment loss*) for **years after the events**.

Wildfires pose a serious threat long after they have been extinguished:

- (i) Fires destroy plant roots which help to stabilise the soil. Normally vegetation absorbs rainfall, reducing runoff.
- (ii) Intense heat, especially from slow-moving fires, can make soil repel water, a condition called hydrophobicity.
- (iii) In extreme circumstances the heat from a wildfire can strip almost all the organic value of the soil, stealing its ability to grow any plants again.

Flooding after a fire is often more severe, as debris and ash left from the fire can form mudflows (*vast amounts of sediment*)

That **risk can remain for years** until/if vegetation regenerates.

Historically:

- There were 4,586 fires and 13,348 ha burnt between 1 July 2020 and 27 June 2021.
- The total area burnt is well above the 2019/20 season, and well above the 5- and 10-year averages.
- This season the North Island accounted for two thirds of the country's wildfires.

<https://fireandemergency.nz/research-and-reports/new-zealand-wildfire-summary/>

Going back a bit in history to 1898 – many, many fires happened all over New Zealand, devastating farmland and “green standing bush” alike. Contaminating the rivers with runoff: “The Hutt river passing over the rapids near the railway bridge was of a dark leaden hue” (See appendix below of some newspaper clippings relating to fires just the Pauatahanui area)

When are conditions going to be right again for another wildfire season?

- With climate change, it is a given that wildfires will happen.

Pine trees contain flammable oils that will burn when exposed to a heat source and this Plan promotes the continued planting of pine trees (plantation forestry) on the highest erosion risk land for soil stabilisation ignoring the greater danger of fire to the sediment retention requirements of the plan. Totally counterproductive –

We are staring down the barrel of a wildfire seasons to come:

- A decade or more of a temperate climate has allowed the growth of vegetation.
- If followed by strong heat with little moisture (perhaps El Niño coming this summer?)
- Vegetation dries out = giant mass of kindling
- Humans cause 90% of fires – we lived in a populated area.
- Wind (*normal in Wellington area*) escalates the degree of intensity and travel speed of wildfires.

This plan needs fire risk mitigation measures, include:

(to tie in with this plan change, wildfires cause sediment loss so to stop sediment loss due to wildfires:-)

Access to water (dams, tanks and spacing, size of same required)

Setback requirements of ALL vegetation from powerlines

Clear areas around houses and built up areas.

Safety for escape routes

Give knowledge of burn rates to tree species in New Zealand

Does not burn well		Average burn						Burns well	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		Douglas fir		Radiata pine			Eucalyptus species		
		Tasmanian blackwood					Cypress species		
Kotukutuku		Kamahai	Tawa			Totara		Kanuka	
Broadleaf		Ngaio	Rimu			Tree ferns		Manuka	
								Gorse	
Lower fire risk					Higher fire risk				

Scale of flammable tree species. Source: Farm Forestry New Zealand

This plan change with its increased emphasis on plantation of both some native and exotic forest **IS GOING TO ENHANCE** the already increasing menace **OF WILDFIRES**. Other countries are again encouraging livestock grazing, silvopastoral practices, and using cattle, sheep, and goats to form firebreak areas.

This plan promotes revegetation of large areas, and puts fire corridors along all rivers.

Wildfires cause much more than **sediment loss** (all that this plan is concerned with) – think, lives lost, businesses lost, homes lost, pets lost, farms lost, native flora and fauna lost, forests lost.

A COMPLETE RETHINK is needed, and quickly.

2. OBSTRUCTIONS TO WATERWAYS - causing river diversion and sediment creation
No "GOOD RIVER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES" defined

Waterway obstructions, ie fallen trees and overgrown weeds infestations are not dealt with in this plan change. When a river/stream is obstructed/blocked it will find another way around the blockage, thereby cutting a NEW channel, thereby causing more sedimentation. A requirement needs to be made that when trees or growth obstruct a water channel it needs to be cleared before the river/stream is forced to deviated.

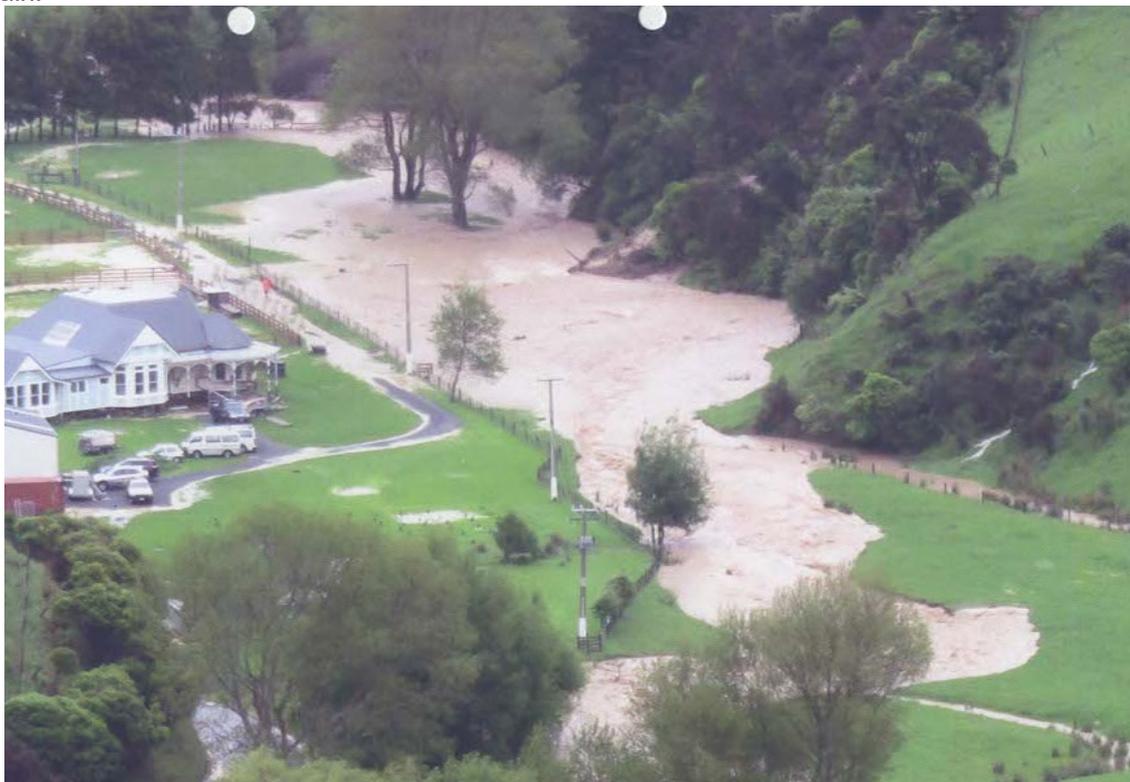
Example of obstruction: (1) Aerial view of Moonshine stream today (14/12/23)



(2) Along Moonshine stream view of same obstruction (14/12/23)



(3) Same Moonshine Stream (Nov 2016) in flood, only a very short distance downstream of the above present obstruction. With the present obstruction the next flood of the below magnitude will possibly wash out Moonshine Road again.



Presently I understand a GWRC Resource consent is needed to remove material from a riverbed even if it is or has potential to block/dam said same river. That is if the landowner is willing to take the obstruction out of the river. Whereas other councils see it as a requirement of “good river management” to keep rivers clear of obstructions and even help do so.

ie Northland Regional Council – River Management Guideline:

Good river management

Aspects of good river management include:

- maintaining vegetation
- clearing **obstructions** and preventing plants and other objects, such as logs, from blocking waterways
- gravel management in some areas
- erosion control
- pest control.

Landowner responsibilities

You can help look after the health of our rivers by:

- managing stock to keep them out of rivers and other waterways
- planting vegetation to protect and stabilise river banks
- maintaining vegetation to prevent waterway **obstruction**
- managing animal and plant pests.

Good river management protects our property and land from damage. Waikato Regional Council and landowners have responsibilities to maintain and protect our waterways. Working together ensures our rivers are healthy and well managed.

A river's flow and course can be affected by bank erosion and the build up of debris, silt or gravel.

River management works help to keep rivers flowing on course, and include:

- protecting and stabilising riverbanks, through fencing and planting and coordination of works along river banks
- controlling bank erosion, for example by using rock protection, groynes or other riverbank stabilisation works
- removing blockages
- undertaking river training works - ensuring the flow paths of rivers are kept on course
- undertaking gravel and sand management.

Benefits of river management

Good river management practice helps protect your property and land from damage.

Effective river management reduces:

- erosion - protecting your valuable soil
- sedimentation – improving water quality
- damage from flooding – saving you money.

Good river management also improves recreational opportunities, for example, swimming, and habitat for aquatic plants and animals, such as whitebait.

Rivers also hold cultural, recreational and aesthetic value. They are a source of water and are home to a variety of aquatic animals and plants.

By managing rivers and streams we help protect our quality of life.

Good river management

Aspects of good river management include:

- maintaining vegetation
- clearing obstructions and preventing plants and other objects, such as logs from blocking waterways
- gravel management in some areas
- erosion control
- pest control

You can protect river banks from erosion by:

- stock management – for example, fencing to keep stock out of rivers and other waterways.
- planting the riverbank – for example, with natives.

Areas of the Horokiwi River have had streamside planting undertaken years ago, now in places it is densely vegetated in pest weeds which spread downriver to other properties that were previously weed free. Every flood brings more and more weeds. The river is not visible in places – how obstructed is anyone's guess? Is this what is intended for all of GWRC rivers with this plan change – presently it is **not looking like good river management** to me.

3. Gravel Extraction/Channel Clearance

Just a warning note: more extraction of gravels from the Hutt River needed to be undertaken to cope with the previous flood volumes; let alone the future volumes of water this river will have to cope with climate change generated floods to come.

According to my long dead father “six quarries took gravels from the river to keep the channel clear” – where is this done now? You can see gravel buildup above the Whakatiki/Hutt Rivers junction! When the Hutt River breaches the stopbanks **much more than sediment** will enter the Te Whanganui a Tara/Wellington Harbour!

The flood in 1939 filled the whole valley from Haywards Hill across to Stokes Valley: Note the old Haywards suspension bridge that normally crossed the Hutt River with ease but is itself underwater with much more water flowing either side.

Manor Park Golf Links and Hayward Suspension Bridge Flooded - 12 December 1939

All Photographs by ‘Evening Post’ Staff Photographers.



View from the hillside across the Manor Park golf links yesterday afternoon, when the flood was at its height. In the middle is the suspension bridge which gives access to the links. The flooding in this region was widespread, and it was still raining steadily when the photograph was taken.

EVENING POST, VOLUME CXXVIII, ISSUE 141, 12 DECEMBER 1939, PAGE 7

The Hutt River running a “banker” beneath the new Westein Hutt Road bridge.



EVENING POST, VOLUME CXXVIII, ISSUE 141, 12 DECEMBER 1939, PAGE 7

This is the Silverstream Bridge just about to capacity.

Some previous floods were exceptionally large but with climate change planning is needed for even bigger disasters. Most sediment is lost in flood events and the related erosion. Planning for these extreme events in the Plan is not evident but would seem appropriate. What is the use of the little stuff if no preparation/consideration is given for the extreme damaging events. All the small good works (and more) will exit/be destroyed in one extreme downpour!

- 4. Pest animals** (deer, pigs, wild cattle, wild goats, wild sheep) all eat into my carrying capacity but according to the change plan writers are not able to be counted as stock units. Why not? They “graze” my pastures, and destroy my regenerating bush, cause untold erosion damage. As a lot of these pest animals originate from GWRC lands and once leave are said to be no longer their responsibility but the destructive animals keep coming, not only to me but to many, many more properties. These animals contribute HUGELY to erosion/sediment problems. Where are pest animals dealt with in this Plan change?

5. What is a “River Bed”? Needs a definition

I cannot find a definition of a “river bed” in the 118 times “bed” is presented in Plan Change 1.

Is it surface water body? Therefore, any stream that is underground for part/s of year is NOT a river?

Or as on page 114 “the river beds are stony”?

What is a small sized stream?

What is a medium sized stream?

What is a river?

Does a river mean flowing water any time of the year – then my driveway and your driveway is a river in a rainstorm! Does that make your driveway a river for the rest of the year also?

6. Whakatiki River and Little Wainui River?

The plan has nothing at all about the Whakatiki River/Little Wainui River – Why?

Is it because it is surrounded by GWRC forestry? And has huge potential for sedimentation problems?

7. Zinc Contamination

Another, no so well know, source of zinc contamination comes from Transpower towers – water blasting of one tower previously painted with Zinga will produces up to 250kg of zinc over the adjoining area – if near a water course this will be a heavy contributor to a specific areas contamination.

8. Trout – Why does protection of trout have significant indigenous biodiversity value?

I do not understand the protection of trout fishery rivers and spawning waters – these are the “deer of the river”. No tourist trout fishing industry is in the area. This inclusion seem to be at odds with other government department statements.

Introduced species – Īnanga are eaten by introduced fish like trout. Trout also compete for the same food and habitat.

<https://environment.govt.nz/publications/our-freshwater-2020/issue-1-our-native-freshwater-species-and-ecosystems-are-under-threat/>

9. New Zealand is geologically a young country: Our country is still in the throes of mountain building, with a high level of erosion from its many fault lines. – These are out of mere mortals’ control, however much we many wish or regulate otherwise

10. GWRC PLAN CHANGE 1

(i) This plan is not easily understood – therefore not easily used or put into practice.

It seems to focus on the detail but has lost sight of the bigger picture.

(ii) It misses many major contributing factors to sediment in rivers ie Fires, Obstructions, climate change.

(iii) Increasing size/frequency of flood events will cause damage to permeant fencing and plantings. People will only put in effort to see it taken away in a major flood – they will not be so open to repeat fencing and plantings – once burnt twice shy. (I talk here from experience)

Even GWRC monies are really coming from the publics back pocket.

APPENDIX - Fires Pāuatahanui Area January 1898

Compiled by Heather Phillips

Please note: "Pahautanui" is the original spelling of this area in 1898

EVENING POST, VOLUME LV, ISSUE 7,
10 JANUARY 1898

BUSH AND SCRUB FIRES.

A correspondent writes to us from Silverstream stating that a fire is raging in the valley, and last night burned the scrub round the place where Hawthorne, victim of last year's tragedy, was buried by whoever it was that murdered him. The sawpit is also on fire, and the valley is filled with smoke from the burning bush.

The bush fire that has been burning during the past week at Belmont worked its way along the back of the range, and yesterday came over on the Petone side. In a short time two beautiful gullies immediately opposite the railway platform at White's Line were in flames. The spectacle last evening was a grand one, but the matter is most regrettable, as the gullies were a favourite resort of Petone residents, and contained a quantity of splendid ferns, many of which were fully 20 feet high. Another fire, in the vicinity of Crofton, has done much damage to the standing bush here.

A bush fire in the Mangatora Valley destroyed all the trout in the river for several miles down the provincial boundary. Thousands of dead fish were lying in every pool in the river.

Last night a large fire worked its way from the head of the Horokiwi Valley through towards the Hutt district, destroying *en route*, so it is said, somewhere about a thousand sheep, one settler alone losing 300.

Top c: Large Bush Fire, Horokiwi Valley, Belmont, 800 Sheep Burnt

STAR, ISSUE 6074, 11 JANUARY 1898
Variat on:

WANGANUI HERALD, VOLUME XXXII, ISSUE 9334, 11 JANUARY 1898
AUCKLAND STAR, VOLUME XXIX, ISSUE 8, 11 JANUARY 1898
NORTH OTAGO TIMES, VOLUME XXXVI, ISSUE 9098, 11 JANUARY 1898
NEW ZEALAND HERALD, VOLUME XXXV, ISSUE 10647, 11 JANUARY 1898
TIMARU HERALD, VOLUME LX, ISSUE 2599, 11 JANUARY 1898
WANGANUI CHRONICLE, VOLUME XXIXI, ISSUE 12288, 11 JANUARY 1898
SOUTHLAND TIMES, ISSUE 13946, 11 JANUARY 1898
ASHBURTON GUARDIAN, VOLUME XVIII, ISSUE 4391, 11 JANUARY 1898
HASTINGS STANDARD, ISSUE 522, 11 JANUARY 1898
THAMES ADVERTISER, VOLUME XXIX, ISSUE 8936, 11 JANUARY 1898
SOUTH CANTERBURY TIMES, ISSUE 9034, 11 JANUARY 1898
POVERTY BAY HERALD, VOLUME XXV, ISSUE 8109, 11 JANUARY 1898
WEST COAST TIMES, ISSUE 10687, 11 JANUARY 1898
COLONIST, VOLUME XLI, ISSUE 9067, 11 JANUARY 1898
OTAGO DAILY TIMES, ISSUE 11007, 11 JANUARY 1898
LYTTELTON TIMES, VOLUME XCIX, ISSUE 11474, 11 JANUARY 1898
NELSON EVENING MAIL, VOLUME XXXII, ISSUE 8, 11 JANUARY 1898
THAMES STAR, VOLUME XXX, ISSUE 8963, 11 JANUARY 1898
PATEA MAIL, VOLUME XI, ISSUE 5, 12 JANUARY 1898
TEMUKA LEADER, ISSUE 3231, 13 JANUARY 1898
AUCKLAND STAR, VOLUME XXIX, ISSUE 16, 20 JANUARY 1898

BUSH FIRES.

[PER PRESS ASSOCIATION.]
WELLINGTON, JAN. 10.

Bush fires are raging in several parts of the Hutt district. At Belmont some beautiful bush was destroyed.

A fire in the Mangatora Valley destroyed all the trout in the river for several miles down the provincial boundary. Thousands of dead fish were lying in every pool in the river.

Last night a large fire worked its way from the head of the Horokiwi Valley through towards the Hutt district, destroying *en route* somewhere about a thousand sheep, one settler alone losing eight hundred.

WELLINGTON, JAN. 11.

Grass fires in Wairarapa have done a good deal of damage to fencing. A fire which started at Paikakariki has worked its way over the hills, destroying everything *en route*. Several settlers have lost a good many sheep, one as many as 800, and more than one had a sharp fight in saving his homestead. The bush at Crofton, just outside the town, to which the Government was induced to devote £400 to save it as a reserve, is involved in the general destruction, and little of it is now left.

Top c: Large Bush Fire, Horokiwi Valley, Belmont, 800 Sheep Burnt

NEW ZEALAND TIMES, VOLUME LXVII, ISSUE 3329, 11 JANUARY 1898

BUSH FIRES.

A portion of the hills to the northward of Wellington presented a bright spectacle last night, being covered with a glowing crown of flame which glittered and glimmered through the clear night air. For the past few days fires have been raging along the mountains abutting the Hutt Valley in several places, and though, speaking generally, not much harm has been done, but some good, much natural scenery has been destroyed, and several pleasant resorts where the city folks loved to foregather during the summer holidays. Several fern gullies abutting Petone in particular have been visited by the flames and utterly destroyed—an irreparable loss from a scenic point of view. At Silverstream a fire has been raging for a day or two past, which ran over the spot where Hawthorne was buried, and is now raging through the black birch wilderness in the hills far back.

A fire which started at Paikakariki some days ago came on over the hills, destroying a great deal of the bush, scrub and herbage *en route*. At Moonshine the settlers were obliged to rally on Sunday night to fight back the fire, and in several cases to protect their homesteads. On one or two stations and farms several losses of stock were experienced. Mr John Jones, of Moonshine, estimates that he has lost 800 sheep, and Mr Kerr, of Horokiwi, a considerable number. All the settlers in that vicinity have lost a considerable quantity of fencing, and the fear is expressed that if rain does not come soon there will be a shortage of feed, which will seriously affect the stock.

Topic: Bush Fire, Moonshine Valley, Horokiwi Valley, Sheep, Farming
People: Jones, Kerr

EVENING POST, VOLUME LV, ISSUE 10,
13 JANUARY 1898

IN THE HUTT VALLEY.

One of our staff, who is to-day investigating the state of affairs in the Hutt Valley, telephones this afternoon as follows:

Fires are raging on the hills all along the western side of the Hutt Valley, and the freshening gale is stirring them into renewed activity, parts of the valley being full of smoke.

At Hayward's and at Silverstream the fires appear to be the fiercest. At the former place at about 2.30 this afternoon it looked as if the fire would be carried from the hills across the railway line into the valley itself. So far the chief damage done appears to be to the grass and fences.

There are rumours of heavy losses in the Wainui-o-mata Valley.

[On enquiring by telephone from the Wainui Bureau, we learn that no serious damage is there known to have been suffered, but there are fires about the district, and an extensive one appears to be raging in the direction of Moore's Valley.]

Topic: Bush Fires, Haywards (Manor Park), Wainui o-mata, Moores Valley

IN THE COUNTRY.

Yesterday large volumes of smoke enveloped the city and harbour from fires raging over all the country round about. Advice from Khandallah were that the fire which was raging there on Wednesday had abated to some extent, and that the danger to the residences was practically over. The Defence Department offered the services of the Permanent Artillerymen to assist the settlers; but a reply was received that they would not be needed.

The hills on the western side of the Hutt valley were blazing for miles yesterday, chiefly in the clearings and wooded country.

It is not anticipated that much damage will be occasioned by these fires, but on the contrary that they will have the effect of clearing large areas of country ready for sowing with grass seed when the rain comes along. Train passengers say that the fire was working havoc amongst the ferns in the gullies and the birches on the ridges at Hayward's and the Silverstream yesterday afternoon. At the former place the flames showed a tendency to come down into the valley, but eventually they resisted the temptation. Here and there incipient grass fires occurred on the flats, but were mostly extinguished by the settlers before making any headway.

Multiple fires in Wainuiomata, Brooklyn, several in Wairarapa

Top c: Bush Fires, Haywards

A TRIP UP THE HUTT VALLEY.

There have been so many rumours in circulation lately concerning the extent and amount of the damage done by the bush fires now burning on the hills enclosing the Hutt Valley, that a representative of this journal was despatched yesterday to endeavour to ascertain what the devastation had really been.

Looking from the city towards Petone the whole of the Hutt Valley appeared to be enveloped in one immense cloud of smoke, but closer investigation showed that there were large areas comparatively free from its unwelcome presence. Leaving by the morning train, our representative found that until he reached Petone there was no sign of fires in active life, although the hillside almost the whole of the way from Ngahauranga was scarred with the fires which had recently passed over it. At Petone, on the hills behind the woollen mill, the smoke curled upwards from the smouldering logs left from the conflagration which swept over it the day previous, while some distance further back thick clouds crawled along the tops of the ridges, evidently from burning grass. A large area of grazing country on these hills appears to have been covered by the fires, and the loss in feed must be considerable.

On the other side of the Korokoro Stream the signs of fires still in activity were to be seen in all directions, many dead trees in the bush on the hills opposite the Petone Railway Station breaking into flames at every gust of wind and spreading the fire to the logs and rubbish scattered around.

It is after passing the Lower Hutt, however, that one gets properly into the region of smoke. Looking from the Belmont Station across the Hutt Valley the hills on the further side, which usually stand out in such bold relief, were almost invisible. In one large gully, opening wide on to the Hutt, the smoke had banked up till it reminded one of a lantern entertainment, in which the sheet on which the pictures are thrown gleams out a dull white in the surrounding gloom. The dimly visible hills were the gloomy surroundings, the smoke-hidden valley the sheet—very much discoloured.

Passing on to Hayward's the smoke became thicker, rolling across the railway line in occasional clouds as the gusts of wind swept it down from the hills. Enquiry elicited the fact that the smoke came from burning logs which are said to have been set alight by fires started in Pahautauui and Moonshine, both many miles away. The strong wind had carried the fire along up hill and down dale, through green standing bush and over streams, burning grass and fences on its destructive way. The smoke made things most unpleasant for the residents in this locality, who appear to have had rather a bad time of it.

Leaving Hayward's nothing could be seen ahead but the thick curtain of smoke stretching from one side of the valley to the other. Gradually the dark, shadowy outlines of the Silverstream hills began to loom through the smoke clouds which were pouring down from fires on the hills on the western side of the Hutt River. In fact, all the smoke was coming from that direction, the wind being nor-westerly. The scene of the Silverstream tragedy showed traces of the fire which had passed over it a couple of days previously, but the fire itself had now journeyed on, and was visible in the far distance.

Continues

Beyond Silverstream the atmosphere became clearer, and from thence to the Upper

Hutt only a slight haze hung over the district. At the Upper Hutt our representative left the train, and went per bicycle express some distance in the direction of Mungaroa, where he learned that Mr. Fahey and other settlers had lost a quantity of firewood and fencing through the fires. The distant hills all around showed signs of fires which had been burning for some days. Most of these were caused by settlers burning their felled bush. This appeared to have been the cause of the large fires at Akatarawa, which were still smouldering.

Returning homewards, our representative made repeated enquiries of the settlers in different parts as to the extent of the damage, but apparently it has not been very great so far. Mr. Barton was reported to have been one of the heaviest sufferers, but to what extent could not be ascertained, while a settler in the Wainuiomata district was said to have lost over 800 head of sheep. The fires in most cases started among the recently-felled bush, but most of the smoke is now coming from the green bush and logs to which it has spread, and dead trees are to be seen in all directions. In some of the gullies on the Silverstream hills the fire has made clean sweeps, but the land is so rough there that it will be of little use to the owners. In fact, as one settler put it, it will do more harm than good, for now they will have to fence where in the past the rubbish and scrub did away with the necessity. A large portion of the country over which these particular fires have passed is of this nature, so that the losses should not be heavy. It is where they have spread to the grazing country and burned up grass that the heaviest losses will be suffered, and this seems to have happened most extensively about the Upper Belmont hills.

The wind freshened into a gale as our representative passed through Silverstream, starting the fires afresh. The smoke filled up the valley in clouds, which grew thicker and thicker, and made travelling along the main road for some distance decidedly unpleasant. The sun was almost entirely eclipsed, and shone red with his ineffectual efforts to break through the obscuring haze. The Hutt river passing over the rapids near the railway bridge was of a dark leaden hue, reminding one of the dark rain clouds so anxiously looked for just now in all parts of the colony. On the Belmont hills the fires seemed to be getting new strength under the influence of the increasing wind-gusts, and the last glimpse of the Valley with its obscuring fawn-coloured smoke curtain gave indications of a continuance and further spreading of the fires in all directions, this being due to the steadily gathering strength of the wind squalls. If the wind drops, the danger will, of course, be minimised, but in most cases the fires will smoulder on, and may spring up again at any time until rain comes. The settlers on the level lands of the Hutt Valley have been fortunate so far in the fires not having spread to their paddocks. Their trouble up to the present has been confined chiefly to the inconvenience suffered from the smoke.

TO THE WESTWARD OF THE CITY.

The fires between Ohariu, Johnsonville, and Wadestown are still burning, more or less fiercely. Last night the hills in these districts were bright with the fires, but no

Continues

Topic: Bush Fire, Pauatahanui, Haywards, Moonshine, Sun shone red - ineffectual efforts to break through, river dark with ash, burning standing bush also, Upper Belmont hills

EVENING POST, VOLUME LV, ISSUE 11,
14 JANUARY 1898 continued

special damage appears to have been done beyond the burning of the grass. At the place known as Mount Misery, near the first tunnel beyond Khandallah, the fires seemed fiercest last night, and some of the residents were alarmed for the safety of their dwellings.

At Crofton the fire has made its way into the large basin on the southern side of the hill, opposite the railway station, and is spreading rapidly.

Some of the residents at the back of Wadestown were in a state of alarm last evening, the fires threatening them in that direction. In one or two cases the furniture was removed from the houses, but so far as we have been able to learn no great damage was done.

Top c: Bush Fire, Haywards Hill, Moonshine Valley, Belmont Road
People: Barton, Jones

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15 JANUARY 1898

THE HUTT VALLEY DISTRICT

Yesterday afternoon, and in the early part of the evening, fine rain fell at Petone, and at 10 p.m., when the air cleared, it seemed to have put out a large area of fire. This morning the appearances are almost normal. The hills around Belmont are reported to be clear of fire. From Horokiwi also come reports of an improvement, but a considerable area of scrub and gorse is burning on Mr. Chapman's property, which may yet prove a source of danger. However (writes our Petone correspondent), the fire cannot possibly again spread to anything like its former extent.

Top c: Bush Fire, Belmont Hills, Gorse
People: Chapman

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A gentleman who came down by the Manawatu train last night informs us that fires were burning merrily in the gullies at Waikanae and Paraparaumu as the train passed by. We also hear of extensive grass fires in the vicinity of Pahautanui.

Top c: Bush Fires

EVENING POST, VOLUME LV, ISSUE 18,
22 JANUARY 1898

FOR SALE, 250 forward Store Wethers, 2 and 4 tooth. Apply J. W. Jones, Small Farms, Pahautanui.

Perhaps sale due to grass burnt by fires

Top c: Farming, Sheep,
People: Jones

