River Scheme Sustainability Project

Long term communications plan

(internal and external to the project team)

For Internal Use Only

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Who** | **Date** | **Change** | **Status** |
| Abby Tozer | Nov 2013 | First draft | Draft v0.1 |
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# Introduction

This plan outlines the communication activities to support the Bay of Plenty Regional Council’s River Scheme Sustainability Project.

The River Scheme Sustainability Project (RSS), one of Regional Councils key organisational priorities, is a collection of several projects with independent but interrelated plans and deliverables. Overall these projects work together to produce a framework that includes a strategic approach and actions that guide the management of the Bay of Plenty River Schemes across future generations. The strategic approach will be used to guide both operational and governance decision making.

The projects under the umbrella of the RSS are:

* Gap Analysis
* Rating Assessment
* Economic Analysis
* Optioneering
* Climate effects
* Communications
* Any other projects as identified.

For more information on the scope of these projects, refer to the RSS Terms of Reference document and project documentation and files in Objective.

Where possible, this communication plan unites the separate projects to provide a unified set of key messages and consistency in communication, timing and methods. Where necessary, separate activity schedules will exist for the project plans and these should be read in conjunction with this Plan.

This communication plan outlines internal and external communication requirements of the project, for example timing for regular updates to Project Sponsor through to externally facing communications to members of the public.

As the RSS is incorporated into the BOPRC Ten Year Plan, additional communications needs will emerge and should be added to this plan in as far as they relate to the River Schemes.

This document is a living document and will be regularly updated and maintained to provide practical communications guidance, actions and accountabilities. Where the document is significantly updated, it will be circulated to the RSS team for input.

Responsibility for implementation of this plan will sit jointly between project managers and the communications team.

# Project background

There are various schemes in place in the Bay of Plenty to ensure that our communities are protected from events such as flooding and river pathway changes. In these schemes Bay of Plenty Regional Council works with the relevant communities developing plans, practices, and various protection methods.

The sustainability of the current management model is under review in order to ensure that best practice is followed, the schemes make the best use of and align with current legislation and the method is clear and understandable for councillors and the wider public.

The RSS covers the five current River/Drainage/Control schemes and includes drainage schemes both major and minor where these are not already integrated into a river scheme.

In summary this includes:

* Rangitaiki-Tarawera River Scheme (river scheme with 2 major rivers)
* Whakatane – Waimana River Scheme (river scheme with 2 major rivers)
* Waioeka Otara River Scheme (river scheme with 2 major rivers)
* Rangitaiki Drainage Scheme (major drainage scheme)
* Kaituna Catchment Control Scheme (river and drainage scheme)
* 3 minor standalone drainage schemes
* 34 pumping schemes

Private schemes are not included, nor are proposed schemes or other activities not already rated.

# Communications objectives and goals

## 3.1 Objectives of this communications plan

1. To ensure that all communication needs within and outside the project team are identified and allocated to a responsible position.
2. To integrate key messages from the RSS worksteams to ensure that councillors and other key stakeholders are well informed and engaged in the River Scheme Sustainability project.
3. Provide proactive, relevant and regular information to River Scheme stakeholders, ensuring a wider understanding of the ‘River Scheme story.’

## 3.2 Goals

The communications strategy aims to ensure that, through increased and coordinated communications:

* The wider project team, councillors, ratepayers, and council staff understand the importance and value of well-maintained river schemes to the region’s environment and economy – there is engagement with and support for river scheme work
* River schemes gain adequate funding and resourcing within Council – key stakeholders understand the benefits and costs of flood management and the cost of maintaining levels of services in light of large scale changes (ie climate change)
* Stakeholders can make informed decisions about future state by asking whether the current medium-term plan is taking the community to where it needs to be in the future
* Regional Council will relate more effectively with the River Scheme Liaison Groups and Rangataiki River Forum (and when and if appropriate the Kaituna River Authority) and make better use of the knowledge and expertise of these groups.

Where appropriate, this communications plan will integrate findings from other related projects (for example the Terms of Reference for the Liaison Groups) to provide consistent messaging and to strengthen the River Scheme story.

# Audience

Project team stakeholders:

* RSS Steering Group
* Project sponsor
* Business owner
* Project manager
* Workstream leads

Involved RSS stakeholders (two way involvement):

* Councillors who make the resourcing decisions about river schemes
* Internal stakeholders
  + Executive Leadership team and the Water Programme of Action Board
  + Targeted teams within Regional Council
  + General staff
* Members of River Scheme Liaison Groups, who make recommendations about particular schemes
* Co-governance forums (Rangitaiki River Forum and Kaituna River Authority)
* Stakeholder Group 1 – involvement in workshop / option to feed into process (including Federated Farmers, Fonterra, Trustpower, iwi representatives, Territorial Local Authorities - Ōpōtiki, Whakatāne and Kawerau District Councils)

Indirect, general River Scheme stakeholders (one way / information-only)

As above and:

* Stakeholder Group 2 – targeted information supplied (including Fish and Game, Forest and Bird, Schools, IPENZ groups and River Management Forum)
* Stakeholder Group 3 – generally information only:
  + Ratepayers who pay targeted rates for their local river scheme
  + General ratepayers who may believe BOPRC money could be better spent elsewhere and require accountability about how and where we spend our money

# RSS Objectives

A Workshop with key stakeholders was held in February 2013. This workshop outlined the scope of activities for the Project. In particular, participants at that workshop indicated that there needed to be:

* greater community involvement in the existing river schemes
* attention paid to a wider range of views on river management, and
* a clearer understanding of weather cycles and possible impact on the schemes.

# RSS Story

## 6.1 RSS Vision

“Making good decisions about the sustainable river management for communities living alongside Bay of Plenty rivers.”

## 6.2 The River Scheme story

1. Floods can be incredibly damaging and expensive to life and property. Our flood protection works are currently our best defence.
2. These defences are under ever increasing pressure with damage from previous flood events, and changes to our climate, land use, and other factors.
3. It is not sustainable (logistically nor economically) to build ever higher stop banks (and other hard engineering structures) and we must consider the long term impact of our flood protection work. This means we need to consider the current levels of service, scheme management and funding decisions we current make.
4. We need to take action - look at flood risk strategies and consider new options (for example accept the risk, retreat, adapt or defend) and encourage affordable, environmental and economically sustainable land-use practices in our communities.
5. RSS will provide us with the direction for sustainable management of our River Schemes for the next 100 years.

## 6.3 RSS Project Key messages

Key messages will be specific to each task or activity from the RSS projects. The key messages below should underlie more detailed communications.

### Universal key messages for the RSS project:

* The RSS Project will set the direction for sustainable management of existing River Schemes.
* The RSS Project will help us make informed decisions about the future of flood management – “Is the path we are on taking us to a sustainable future?”
* This review will also ensure that:
  + we are following best practice
  + we are making the best use of (and align with) current legislation
  + the methodology we use is clear, credible and defendable.
* The RSS Project will help decision-makers appreciate the balance between the cost and risks of maintaining or reducing levels of services in light of large scale changes (ie climate change).

### Key messages for River Schemes for generally:

* “River Schemes 101” - The BOPRC River Scheme Sustainability Project provides protection for rural and urban people, properties and infrastructure. They are the basis of a coordinated and sustainable approach to managing our rivers
* Rivers schemes require a long term approach to sustainable management. River Schemes are complex, interrelated and community based
* River Schemes have significant and wide-ranging economic and social benefits. They require significant investment throughout their lifespans to ensure understanding, impact and protections remain current
* Significant River Scheme works are already underway and have achieved excellent results for the region. These ‘business as usual’ activities are part of the wider River Scheme Story.

### Key messages for the RSS internal – link to organisational Values:

* This is about the org value of Courage – courageous conversations about risk and how we best manage it. We need to have these difficult conversations now to do the best for our region in the future.
* Kotahitanga - We want you to be involved as we develop some new ideas. Even more important to have people not involved in this area to consider the possibilities.

# Project scope and cross-Council communications

It is important to note that there are numerous projects and business as usual activities across Council that are likely to be impacted by RSS and that may impact on the Project.

There is a risk of overlap in project outcomes and project workstream.

In particular, the **Water Programme of Action** is focussed on freshwater management and water quality matters across the Bay of Plenty. Any RSS issues around flood management or land use relating to the schemes (and associated links to water quality) is likely to impact on the work of this large scale project and both projects should work in tandem on these issues. Care must be taken at the highest level not to duplicate work in these areas.

There is also a risk of overlap in engagement:

* Same person or group asked to engage multiple times across many council activities – ‘engagement exhaustion’
* Same question being asked multiple times by different council activities – ‘multiple voice overload’

Timeliness of communications should consider key community engagement meetings and activities from other projects or workstreams within Regional Council. This includes community meetings regarding projects such as the Rangitaiki Community Irrigation schemes, Kaituna Maketū estuary meetings, Water Programme of Action community engagement. If project communication and engagement is not managed within the wider context of the organisation, there is a risk that stakeholders will feel that they are being invited to meetings often, but not being heard.

Care should also be taken to avoid announcements coinciding with other river-related matters, for example consent conditions on Matahina dam large scale works on the Rangitaiki Floodplains. In these instances there can be a public perception that Council does not know what other parts are doing.

Some of this risk can be managed by ensuring:

* Cross-Council understanding of other communications and engagement activities and careful timing (at the level of ELT and Project Boards)
* Ensuring RSS messages stay focused and project specific
* Ensuring that RSS messages are unique and identifiable.

# Key Project Milestones

Key project milestones will have higher communication needs and should be planned for well in advance.

These include:

* River Scheme Liaison Group quarterly meetings
* Briefing to Incoming Councillors
* Staff roadshows
* Optioneering workshop
* First public announcement (pre/post-workshop)
* Significant updates to Council – in particular presentations of findings from workstreams
  + Rating Assessment – December 2013
  + Economic analysis and Climate Change – June 2014
  + Optioneering – June 2014
* Presentations to Rangitaiki River Forum and Kaituna River Authority
* Completion of Phase II report – June 2014

# Strategic approach

* Provide positive, informative communications that tell a strong and consistent story about river schemes and their value to the region
* Take a multi-channel approach, mixing face to face, online, and print communications so that we can engage as well as inform the audience
* Present information in a wide range of formats – text, video, photos, models, maps, diagrams. Present messages from the ground up
* Monitor, review, and adapt communications approaches as needed.

# Communication and engagement protocols

Any official quotes ad sign-off for all RSS communications should be attributed to the General Manager Natural Hazards unless agreed otherwise.

# Monitoring and evaluation

In addition to the success criteria outlined in section 10 below, the success of this communications approach may include:

* Feedback from Councillors and ELT and other Informal anecdotal feedback
* Nature of debate in Council, in particular for papers related to RSS
* Visits and nature of visits to website pages (Google Analytics)
  + Increase in the number of visitors to Rivers and Drainage pages following agreed publicity
* Increased interest and involvement in Liaison groups.

A full list of communication KPIs is available in the project plan.

# Appendices and tables

* Elevator blurb – the Project in 30 seconds or less. Learnt and used by the Project team and wider ‘champions’ of the project to explain RSS to a new stakeholder when they have (metaphorically or really) a short time in the elevator before the doors open again.
* One page outline of RSS

# Activity profile by key stakeholder group

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|  | Council papers | Field Trips | Briefing for Incoming Councillors | SAM and Off the Record | | Talks at team meetings | | CEO Blog and other email / intranet updates (eg Ken’s what’s hot) | | BOPRC website | | Backyard and Science Bulletin | | Media releases / media coverage | | Letters/targeted comms (phone call/visit etc) | | Public meetings | ELT meetings | Presentations and papers to River Scheme Liaison Groups and minutes | Councillor Workshop | | Presentations and papers to Rangitaiki River Forum | Initial ‘capability building’ presentations to Kaituna River Auth | Consistent informal messaging from key BOPRC staff and stakeholders | Staff roadshow | Optioneering Workshops – invite and involvement |
| RSS stakeholders |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Councillors | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |  | |  | |  | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |  |  | | ✓ |  |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |
| ELT and WPOA Board |  |  |  | |  | |  | | ✓ | |  | |  | |  | |  |  | ✓ |  | |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| Targeted teams at BOPRC |  |  |  | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |  | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| Staff |  |  |  | | ✓ | |  | | ✓ | |  | |  | |  | |  |  | ✓ |  | |  |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| River Scheme Liaison groups |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |  | ✓ |  | ✓ | |  |  |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |
| Rangitaiki River Forum |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |  | ✓ |  |  | |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |
| Kaituna River Authority |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |  | ✓ |  |  | |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |
| Stakeholder Group 1 |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |
| Stakeholder Group 2 |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |  |  | |  |  |  | ✓ |  |  |
| Stakeholder Group 3 |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |  | ✓ |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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|  | Regular (6-weekly +) meetings | Verbal updates from business owner | Monthly meeting | KPI status report | Project Performance reports (mid month each month) from workstream |
| Project Team Stakeholders |  |  |  |  |  |
| RSS Steering Group |  |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| Project Sponsor |  | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |
| Business Owner |  |  | ✓ |  |  |
| Project manager |  |  |  |  | ✓ |
| Workstream leads | ✓ |  |  |  |  |
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# Communication on a page

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Audience** | **What we need them to know** | **what they need to hear from you** | **Vehicle** | **check for understanding** | **Timing** | **Person Responsible** | **What the project needs them to do with this info** |
| RSS Steering Group | Big Picture | As project sponsor written report | ELT monthly reports Meeting |  | Quarterly +initial set up meeting | Sponsor | Formal Champions Add real value |
| Project Sponsor | Key Messages Timeframes and activities (in particular communications) | KPI Status Workstream updates (reporting by exception) Risk management | Verbal updates when appropriate Status report (1 pager) Monthly meeting 1/2 hour | Verbal feedback at meeting | Monthly update (tues) before ELT update | Business owner Project Manager | Take it to ELT and Council as needed Councillors when exceptions |
| Business Owner | Resource conflicts | As above but more detail | Draft reports for Sponsor | Verbal feedback at meeting | Weekly meeting (initially) | Project Manager | Solve Problems Manage risks Highlight key risks and issues to Sponsor Adjust priorities within team |
| Project Manager | All aspects of project | Workstream updates | TBC with each workstream (likely to include at least regular workstream meetings) | Project progress | Monthly meeting | All workstream leads | As above  Resource over-allocation |
| Councillors | Key Messages Education and informing Exception reporting | Initial outline and understanding Exceptions (good and bad) | Status Reports GMs report Council Catch-up elevator blurb informal "champions" | Feedback via CEO | OMR report 6monthly (and by exception) Regular informal talks (elevator blurb) | Sponsor | Talk the right message to outsiders Implement decisions and RSS outcomes |
| ELT / Water Programme Of Action Board | Key messages | Scope creep - push back Progress against products Manage expectations Cross over with other projects or Regional Council activities | 1 page summary report | ELT minutes | Monthly | Sponsor | Praise team Informal champions Support resource requests |
| **Specific Staff:** Natural Hazards, Pollution Prevention, Consents, Land Res,  Civil Defence, Records / reception, Kai Arahi | As above but specific to team (eg records who to send info to and reception - KMs and elevator blurb to answer visitor questions | As above but more detail Flood protection vs Env and cultural | Speaker at their team meetings | as above Test at team meetings | start attending meetings soon and continue until done | business owner and selected support | As above |
| Staff | 1 pager fact sheet key messages elevator blurb What's in it for them / what they should do | It is a project and this is how it fits with the big picture What it means for you Champion key messages | Staff roadshow Brown bag lunches Sam  Off the Record | Good feedback from corridor talk Informal quiz (with prizes) Test at roadshow before and after | 6 monthly - first before Christmas | Comms | Good corridor talk to support Org Priority General understanding Come back to Project team if don't understand or have anything to add |
| River Scheme Liaison Groups | Key messages and where to from here | what we are doing | Regular meeting/paper updates  Optioneering workshop  Letter invite | Workshop mechanism | 2x per year  Workshop once off web ongoing | Sponsor BM Scheme Manager | workshop attendance |
| Co Governance Forums (Rangitaiki River Forum, Kaituna River Authority | Key messages and where to from here | what we are doing | Regular meeting/paper updates  Optioneering workshop  Letter invite | Workshop mechanism | 2x per year  Workshop once off web ongoing | Sponsor BM Scheme Manager | workshop attendance |
| Stakeholder Group 1 | Key messages and where to from here | what we are doing | Optioneering workshop  Letter invite | Workshop mechanism | 2x per year  Workshop once off web ongoing | Sponsor BM Scheme Manager | workshop attendance |
| Stakeholder Group 2 | Key messages | what we are doing | Letter + 1 pager  If you want more contact…. Website - for all | Informing and who to talk to for more information | once off  web ongoing | comms (web etc) | feedback invited |
| Stakeholder Group 3: | Key messages | what we are doing | Website, media releases, public meetings (when approp) | Informing | Ongoing/as req | Comms | Awareness, build towards phase 2 |

# Activity Calendar *(italics tbc)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NOVEMBER** | **Activity** | **Audience** | **Responsibility** |
| 4 | *KT Update to ELT (as appropriate)* | ELT (and WPOA) |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |
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| 8 |  |  |  |
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| 11 | *KT Update to ELT (as appropriate)* | ELT (and WPOA) |  |
| 12 | Rivers Group Symposium – Ken Presentation |  |  |
| 13 | Rivers Group Symposium – Ken Presentation |  |  |
| 14 | FIRST MEETING OF NEW COUNCIL |  |  |
| 15 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| 18 | *KT Update to ELT (as appropriate)*  OMR paper needs to be signed off by KT | ELT (and WPOA) |  |
| 19 |  |  |  |
| 20 | Whakatāne Waimana RSLG meeting – paper only |  |  |
| 21 |  |  |  |
| 22 | Rangitaiki Waimana RSLG meeting – paper only  Update Sam text and info  Paper due for Rangitaiki River Forum (paper in AMS or in HS general update – invite to workshop |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| 25 | *KT Update to ELT (as appropriate)* | ELT (and WPOA) |  |
| 26 | Waioeka Otara RSLG meeting – paper only  *TBC invite to staff Roadshow* |  |  |
| 27 | OMR COMMITTEE MEETING |  |  |
| 28 | Kaituna RSLG meeting – paper only |  |  |
| 29 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **DECEMBER** | **Activity** | **Audience** | **Responsibility** |
| 2 | *KT Update to ELT (as appropriate)* | ELT (and WPOA) |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |
| 4 | Rangitaiki River Forum – paper only |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |  |
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| 9 | *KT Update to ELT (as appropriate) – UPDATE on Rating Review workstream?* | ELT (and WPOA) |  |
| 10 |  |  |  |
| 11 |  |  |  |
| 12 | COUNCIL WORKSHOP (no RSS) |  |  |
| 13 |  |  |  |
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| 16 | *KT Update to ELT (as appropriate)-* | ELT (and WPOA) |  |
| 17 |  |  |  |
| 18 |  |  |  |
| 19 | FULL COUNCIL MEETING (no RSS) |  |  |
| 20 |  |  |  |
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| 21 | *KT Update to ELT (as appropriate)* | ELT (and WPOA) |  |
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| **JANUARY** | **Activity** | **Audience** | **Responsibility** |
| Jan TBC | *Present to staff meetings for key groups (see list)* |  |  |
| JAN TBC | *Present at Staff Roadshow* |  |  |
| 6 | *KT Update to ELT (as appropriate)*  *Website updates and media (if appropriate)*  *JAN TBC Letter to Stakeholder Group 1 and 2 (outline of RSS) – Face to Face if appropriate?* |  |  |
| 7 | *JAN DATE TBC - Field trip for new and returning Councillors* |  |  |
| 8 | *JAN DATE TBC - overview of River Schemes (broadly) and RSS more specifically in early briefings to Kaituna River Authority* | Kaituna River Authority |  |
| 9 | Website updates and media (if appropriate) |  |  |
| 10 |  |  |  |
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| 13 | *KT Update to ELT (as appropriate)* | ELT (and WPOA) |  |
| 14 |  |  |  |
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| 20 | *KT Update to ELT (as appropriate)* | ELT (and WPOA) |  |
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| **February** | **Activity** | **Audience** | **Responsibility** |
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| Feb TBC | *Eastern BOP field trip* |  |  |
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| 11 | Councillor Workshop - Water and RSS |  |  |
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| **Date** | **Activity** | **Audience** | **Responsibility** |
| TBC or ONGOING activities | 30 sec video clips…. |  |  |
| Early March TBC | *WORKSHOPS for Optioneering Workstream* |  |  |
|  | Collect 30 second video clips for the introduction to ELT and Council papers | Various | * AT |
|  | Each Monday – ELT meetings. Ken to include short update on RSS regularly when appropriate | ELT | * KT |
|  | Social media (Facebook/Twitter) to coincide with to coincide with key announcements on RSS or (when appropriate) to increase profile of river schemes more generally | Public | * AT |
| Date and priority TBC | Stocktake and present recommendations for website improvements  Will include where appropriate:   * One-pager information on each scheme * History / story of schemes * ‘what if’ scenarios – costs, modelling etc to show impacts of no schemes * Mention that RSS review is underway and outcomes will be shared when known   NOTE – date for changes TBC when scope/scale known. Agree dates in recs above | Public  BOPRC staff | * AT |

Opportunities for team/communications to keep eye out for:

* Public events (eg where stand is appropriate fieldays etc)
* Opportunities for awards/publications/profile in trade journals for activities around River Schemes
* Opportunities to present to River Scheme Liaison Groups and other key stakeholders
* Opportunities to profile RSS and River Schemes in existing BOPRC publications (Backyard, Science Bulletin etc)
* Involvement of Rangitaiki River forum (newsletter)
* New River Forums as/when formed – part of briefing materials
* Other communications channels as/when available (eg Science Bulletin, Backyard)