

## WRC takes TLC to court over oil spill

WAIKATO Regional Council is taking The Lines Company to court over an oil spill into the Mangaokewa Stream earlier this year.

The stream flows through the centre of Te Kuiti, and in February 1000 litres of transformer oil was accidentally spilled into soil and water on the Mangaokewa.

The charge has been filed in the Hamilton District Court under the Resource Management Act following the effects of the oil spill originating from TLC's Waitete Rd depot in February.

TLC senior communications advisor Louisa Last says the company unreservedly apologises to the community for the leak and has put steps in place to ensure that nothing like this will happen again.

"Being a company that is focused on sustainability we could not be more disappointed that the incident occurred," she says.

"We took ownership of the situation quickly and have worked closely with the Waikato Regional Council which has been instrumental in achieving minimal environmental impact."

WRC investigations manager Patrick Lynch declined to comment about the incident as it is now before the courts, but acknowledged the "high degree of co-operation" shown by TLC following the spill and during the course of the subsequent investigation.

### INVESTIGATION

The oil spill was first noticed by a member of the public on February 8.

An investigation by WRC staff the next day confirmed it was coming from TLC's depot and WRC immediately installed two booms in the river.

Envirowaste, the company used in the clean-up after the *Rena* oil spill on Astrolabe Reef in Tauranga in 2011, was contracted by TLC to investigate how the leak had occurred and compose a clean-up plan that was submitted to the regional council.

The plan, which was implemented immediately, included establishing silt barriers to avoid any further material entering the Mangaokewa while oil-soaked soil was removed.



LOUISA LAST

### SOURCE OF LEAK

Envirowaste's investigation showed that the oil had come from an area designed for repainting transformers and equipment.

The area was enclosed inside a 'bund' wall - a wall designed to hold any leaks should they occur.

But the containment area, installed in 2004, was too small for oil storage tanks that were placed on the site two years after it was built.

It is from these tanks that the leak came from.

When the sight glass on one of the tanks leaked, the containment area was overwhelmed and

the soak hole overflowed causing transformer oil to leach into soil on the river bank and into the Mangaokewa Stream.

TLC believed that the drains from the repainting area went through a separation system installed for the company's truck wash bay when in fact, they were going directly to a soak hole on the bank of the river which was in breach of the original consent conditions.

### AMOUNT LEAKED

Transformer oil is similar to diesel or hydraulic oil.

TLC says the quantity that was leaked was similar to that contained in a linehaul truck or other equipment such as excavators.

More than 800 litres of oil was recovered from the soil that was removed and a further 200 litres from the containment area.

Since the spill TLC has undertaken a full environmental compliance review of the Waitete depot.

Its 13 recommendations are currently being implemented.

## POLICE DESK

### August 24

A TEENAGER was stopped by police while driving on Rangitahi St in Otorohanga and failed an evidential breath test registering 400 micrograms of alcohol per litre of breath. The legal limit is 250mcg/l.

The 17-year-old from Otorohanga will appear in Te Kuiti District Court today.

A 60-year-old truck driver from Te Puke suffered a head laceration after rolling his logging truck on SH4 near Madonna Falls. He was taken by ambulance to Waikato Hospital for treatment. The road was closed for several hours while contractors cleared the logs.

### August 25

POLICE were unable to locate a woman who was seen being dragged into a car on the corner of Anzac and William Sts in Te Kuiti.

### August 26

A MAN wearing a white t-shirt and white rugby league shorts walked into Te Kuiti Dental Centre in Rora St, and stole a money box in broad daylight. After taking \$370 he discarded the box and ran away along the main street.

He is described as Polynesian, of average height with tribal tattoos on both arms and legs. Police are viewing CCTV footage.

A RED Honda motorbike was stolen from a farm shed on SH3.

DEPARTMENT of Conservation staff reported that a large area of fenced off grass at the Ngaherenga Campsite in Pureora had been "ripped up" by "hoons". The offenders forced entry into the campsite by damaging bollards and chains.

### August 29

A 20-year-old Te Kuiti man will appear in court on October 6, after he was stopped by police while riding a stolen

motorbike on Te Kumi Rd. The bike was stolen from a Te Kawa address in 2013. The owner has been informed.

POLICE arrested and transported a Te Kuiti man to Hamilton to appear in court after he "seriously assaulted" a woman. The victim, who suffered a swollen face and bruising, was taken by ambulance to Waikato Hospital for treatment.

A FORBIDDEN driver from Te Kuiti had his car impounded after he was stopped by police while driving on SH3. The 32-year-old will appear in Te Kuiti District Court on September 17.

A TE KUITI man, who refused to leave a Bayne St home in Te Kuiti, was arrested and served with a five-day protection order.

### August 30

AN Otorohanga man was arrested after visiting his ex-partner's home on Phillips Ave and threatening to smash another man and his car.

He was charged with threatening behaviour and will appear in Te Kuiti District Court today.

SEARCH and Rescue were called into action when a South African mother (51) and daughter (9) were reported missing after going for a walk on the Timber Trail through the Pureora Forest. They were found safe and well sheltering at a toilet more than 6km from their car parked on Barryville Rd.

A TE KUITI man was arrested at his home on Ailsa St for riding a motorbike with a disqualified licence. He also failed an evidential breath test registering 567mcg/l - more than twice the limit of 250. He will appear in Te Kuiti District Court on September 17.

● North King Country Police attended eight family violence incidents from August 24-30.

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