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**Committee** Rural Services and Wairarapa  
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## Streams Alive Programme

### 1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the Streams Alive programme that is promoted by Greater Wellington. The programme offers incentives to private landowners to increase biodiversity on private land.

### 2. Significance of the Decision

The matters in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### 3. Background

*Mind the Stream* is an umbrella term used to incorporate a number of riparian projects throughout the region.

Under the *Mind the Stream* Programme, Greater Wellington will:

- provide advice about streamside management options for all rivers and streams in the region, and
- offer financial assistance and advice for landowners in the Streams Alive Programme to revegetate riparian areas in high value streams with appropriate species.

One of the focus programmes is the *Streams Alive Programme*. Its aim is to protect and enhance ecological diversity within and around streams that have high ecological value. The project focuses on increasing native plants in the riparian zones to protect fish habitat, while increasing the bird and insect populations in the riparian landscape and improving water quality.

The Streams Alive Programme builds on Greater Wellington's biodiversity programmes for private landowners – the Key Native Ecosystem programme, the Wetland Incentives Programme, and the private land protection programme. It is a responsive programme that is delivered by providing information and financial assistance to landowners to promote the appropriate management of riparian areas on private land.

This project is designed to work in the high value streams using criteria that were adopted in the Riparian Strategy. The criteria are:

- The stream already has a reasonable amount of high quality aquatic habitat that can be extended and improved by riparian management.
- Riparian management will be effective at rehabilitating any degraded aquatic habitat in the stream catchment.
- The stream will be able to be a functioning ecosystem for the aquatic life that would naturally live there (for example, there are no major barriers to fish passage).
- The stream could provide ecological links and corridors once it is rehabilitated because of the relatively short distance to the sea or Lake Wairarapa.
- The selected stream catchments are representative of the range of stream types in the region.

Using Geographic Information System (GIS) modelling, the selection process for this project was completed in February 2004. After confirmation of the GIS desktop results against actual stream and catchment conditions, 12 catchments that collectively meet the criteria in the strategy were selected. They are:

- Waitohu Stream and Otaki River (flow to the Kapiti Coast)
- Ration Creek (flows to the Pauatahanui Inlet)
- Mangaroa River (Hutt River tributary)
- Karori Stream and Wainuiomata River (flow to Cook Strait)
- Glendu Creek and Kaiwhata River (flow to Wairarapa east coast)
- Owhanga Stream (flows to Lake Wairarapa from the Tararua Range)
- Waiohine River (Ruamahanga River tributary)
- Upper Ruamahanga River (source in the Tararua Range)
- Waihora Stream (lower Ruamahanga River tributary).

All privately owned streamside land in the *Streams Alive* catchments is eligible for assistance, provided enough streamside area is made available for planting and provided the area is not excluded because of flood protection works. The land may be used for dairy farming, sheep and beef farming, horticulture, a life-style block, or even be in an urban area. Any capital works such as fences, bridges, culverts, and stock water supplies are the responsibility of the landowner. Native plants, planting and a weed control programme will be provided by Greater Wellington.

The programme is for private land, not public land. Greater Wellington, government departments including the Department of Conservation, and the territorial authorities are not eligible to apply for funding assistance from this programme. Funding assistance for streamside work on public land is available through the Take Care programme.

It should be emphasised that these are high value streams.

The Council, in its long-term strategic plan, has also identified six degraded streams. In one instance – the Waitohu Stream – there is an overlap. Restoration of streamside areas in the lower Waitohu catchment should help rehabilitate its degraded stream sections to the high ecological standard that exists upstream.

#### **4. Policy and Funding Arrangements**

Greater Wellington adopted its Riparian Management Strategy in July 2002 (see Environment Committee report 02.333). In the Strategy, Greater Wellington said that it would:

- assess and report on the achievements of the pilot programmes; and
- identify the high priority catchments where Greater Wellington will give financial support to riparian work.

These projects have been completed and two reports, *Riparian rehabilitation – what difference does it make?* and *Selecting catchments for streamside management assistance* have been published. These reports were presented to the Committee at its February meeting (Report 05.41).

Streams Alive is funded through the Lands and River Operations Department in the Wairarapa and comes from the Riparian Budget outlined in the Riparian Management Strategy. The budget for the 2004/05 was \$160,000 and is \$190,000 for the current financial year.

The Streams Alive Programme currently has one staff member dedicated to running the programme and providing general riparian advice for private landowners. The workload for this person is high.

#### **5. Work Completed to Date**

At the end of June 2004/05 financial year it was estimated four kilometres would be planted. Actual plantings achieved totalled 2.7 kilometres due to the appointment of a new staff member and the development of literature, e.g. *Mind the Streams*, and *Controlling Problem Weeds in Riparian Zones*.

Works are completed on 10 landowners properties distributed within 4 catchments located throughout the region. The catchments are the Waitohu, Mangaroa, Otaki and Waihora.

To date the budget for this financial year has been allocated and there are five landowners on the waiting list for the Steams Alive programme. The allocation of the Streams Alive projects is \$75,000. This budget is allocated for the upcoming year and we are starting a waiting list for future participants. The programme has taken on 18 new landowners in this planting year. There are currently 28 active projects that are taking place. Five of these landowners are on farms that will have a planting programme for one to three years.

The planting season will be ending at the end of September, by which time over \$10,000 natives will be planted on 3.8 kilometres of stream. There may be room in the budget for more planting to take place on the Kapiti Coast in June next year.

## **6. Future Promotion**

To date the project has operated on a “word of mouth” basis. This has resulted in a full workload but a less representative work programme.

Targeted communication seems to be needed in the Wairarapa, as shown on the following list:

Mangaroa (Wellington) 7 new sites (word of mouth)

Waitohu (Kapiti) 5 new sites (word of mouth)

Waihora (Wairarapa) 1 new site (targeted approach)

Otaki – 2 new sites (word of mouth)

Wainuiomata – 1 new site – GW staff passed on details of programme

Upper Ruamahanga – 1 new site (targeted approach)

Kaiwhata – 2 new sites (targeted approach)

While specific communications work will be targeted in the Wairarapa there will be other, less targeted communications for the other catchments in order to raise general awareness of the programme.

General information will be included on the website, fact sheets/packs available for those who are interested in the programme (if they contact us).

## 7. Communication Opportunities

There is a biodiversity newsletter that is being developed for members of the *Streams Alive Programme* and the *Wetlands Incentive Programme* that will be used to provide information to landowners about maintaining and increasing biodiversity on their land. The newsletter will also be available on the website and as information to provide to people outside these two programmes.

There is also the intention to use Council publications (Elements, etc), local newspapers, farm group newsletters, Landcare Trust newsletters, Fish and Game publications, Forest and Bird publications, and through field days. However, the programme currently does not have the staff resources to promote the programme fully.

For future years articles in media and newsletters can be used to profile successful riparian planting projects. We are also developing a series of posters that will focus on the biodiversity and land management programmes that are offered through Greater Wellington. These can be displayed at the different events that Greater Wellington participate in, including Small Farm Field Days, Farm Environment Awards, Conservation Week and Sea Week, etc.

## 7. Recommendation

*That the Committee:*

- (1) **Receive the report**
- (2) **Note its contents.**

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