

Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region

Draining land



Drains are often dug to remove surface water, lower the water table and minimise the effects of flooding. They can make land more accessible to livestock and machinery and suitable for pasture or crops. This has resulted in many (over 95%) of Wellington's wetlands being lost, with negative impacts on biodiversity. Nevertheless the drains themselves have replaced some of the lost habitat and can provide environmental, as well as productive benefits.

Can I maintain my existing drain?

It is a permitted activity under Rule R121 to maintain an existing drain that meets the definition of a 'drain' in the Proposed Natural Resources Plan. However to remain a permitted activity, work must be carried out in specific ways, such as not altering the original channel grade or cross section of the drain channel. If weeds and vegetation are being removed with an excavator, a weed bucket must be used and every effort made to return fish and koura to the water. See Rule R121 to check out the full set of conditions (including general conditions in Section 5.5.2) and definitions prior to undertaking any work.

What do I need to do to install a new drain?

When installing new drains the Proposed Natural Resources Plan encourages landowners to follow good practice procedures to prevent over-drainage, in-stream habitat destruction, downstream flooding or erosion.

Establishing a new drain to maintain or lower ground water levels (i.e. the water table) is permitted by Rule R130 as long as all of the conditions are complied with. There must be no increased risk of flooding or loss of water table for neighbouring properties or effect on water levels in nearby rivers, lakes or wetlands.

Is it a drain or is it a stream?

Please note: if you are constructing a new drain or thinking of altering an existing drain you need to make sure that it is not a natural waterway or near a wetland. If you are unsure please contact Wellington Regional Council.

What is the Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region?

The Proposed Natural Resources Plan (the proposed Plan) is a new regional plan designed to integrate the Wellington Region's five existing regional plans-- the [Regional Coastal Plan](#), [Regional Freshwater Plan](#), [Regional Soil Plan](#), [Regional Air Quality Management Plan](#) and [Regional Plan for Discharges to Land](#). Regional plans are developed under the Resource Management Act to set out the objectives, policies and methods for people and organisations that use a region's resources for a variety of purposes:

The proposed Plan was developed following a review of the five existing regional plans from 2011 to 2015. Until the GWRC decides to adopt the proposed Plan, resource users must comply with rules in the proposed Plan and rules in the five existing plans.

There is a lot of information in the proposed Plan and a lot to understand, so if you need help to figure out if your activity is permitted, or requires a resource consent, or if you have any questions at all, please contact us for more information 0800 496 734 or regionalplan@gw.govt.nz



Permitted: no resource consent is required provided you comply with the conditions in the rule.

Controlled, discretionary or non-complying: a resource consent from Wellington Regional Council is required. Conditions may need to be met.

Prohibited: cannot be undertaken at any time.