For the health of our waterways

Supporting landowners to meet their obligations under the Proposed Natural Resources plan

December 2016

What are landowners’ obligations in relation to waterbodies on their properties?

Working for the overall health of our water has always been a key role of the Greater Wellington Regional Council.

Now two new programmes are helping landowners in our region to continue to improve water quality in the waterways and wetlands on their properties, as well as helping them comply with the rules set out in the proposed Natural Resources Plan (pNRP).

What are the new requirements that have been introduced in the pNRP?

The pNRP contains a number of significant changes to the rules controlling what landowners can do on their land. The new rules require the exclusion of stock from waterways and the protection of scheduled wetlands.

The pNRP for the Wellington Region intends to restrict stock from accessing Category 1 and Category 2 waterways. It also requires landowners to manage the effects of stock access to other waterbodies.

We’re always looking to find better ways to work with landowners to ensure they can easily understand how the pNRP will impact them and the environment.

We want to support landowners and provide assistance to help them protect our environment and this is where the two new programmes come in.

What’s the problem with stock getting into wetlands on landowners properties?

Keeping livestock out of waterways focuses on animals which have the most effect and situations, such as intensive grazing, where they can do most damage. Protecting waterways improves the quality of the water and the conditions for native plants and animals that live in the waterways. We also want to protect areas of high value.

Within three years, all livestock will need to be excluded from outstanding wetlands, listed in the proposed Plan (Schedule A3), all livestock other than sheep from the significant wetlands in Schedule F3, and all livestock excluded from Category 1 surface water bodies (which are identified in the pNRP). Within seven years all livestock except sheep need to be excluded from
Category 2 surface waterbodies. For all other waterbodies, the effects of any stock access already need to be managed in accordance with Rule R97.

**Have you consulted with the community on the pNRP?**


**Is this going to cost landowners money?**

Yes. We recognise that complying with these rule changes will impose costs on landowners. Some landowners may already be making moves to protect these areas and we’re also very aware that doing so is no small task. There are challenges and costs will vary with the nature and extent of the land to be fenced, but we have set up funding to try to limit the financial impacts on landowners.

**Can I get any financial help to meet my obligations?**

Yes. We are creating two new programmes to support landowners be compliant with the pNRP. The two programmes are called the Wetland and the Riparian programmes. These programmes will support the protection and sound management of wetlands and riparian margins ahead of these rules coming into effect.

These two programmes will also provide support and financial assistance for fencing and, where appropriate, planting identified sites. In addition to funding, GWRC officers will be able to provide advice to support for planning how to restore wetlands and riparian margins. This support and funding is available now, ahead of the new rules coming into effect.

**When do these new rules come in?**

Though the rules around excluding stock from waterways are being phased in over the next six years, you still need to be aware that these pNRP requirements will begin to take effect from July 2018. The two new programmes on offer will help you prepare landowners for the changes.

**The pNRP is not final - what if the rules change as a result of the hearings?**

There is always a chance the rules could change as a result of the pNRP hearings process. However, the stock access rules have been well consulted and may not change significantly. Support is available now so it’s worthwhile talking with us as soon as possible.

**Has Greater Wellington Regional Council contacted landowners before now about the assistance being offered?**
We’ve already identified streams, rivers and wetlands we consider are important to protect. These are the Category 1 waterbodies. These waterbodies are rare in our region. Many of these sites are home to vulnerable native plants and animals.

Landowners with these significant sites are the ones we have been in contact with and who we want to help with these two new programmes we are introducing.

Some landowners have already been informed that they have one of these Category 1 wetlands on their property.

A letter was sent directly to these landowners in 2014 and another letter was sent at the end of 2016 to help them understand the help available.

I’m a landowner - so where do I go to find information on these two new programmes?

There is information on our website.

I would really like someone from The Greater Wellington Regional Council to come and talk about what I need to do

We’re happy to come out and see landowners and discuss individual circumstances.

If you have received a letter from us, let us know and we’ll come and have a look at your land, your waterways or your wetlands. We would like to hear from you about the challenges you face. Then let’s see if we can’t work out a plan together.

Please email or phone us (details below), and we are happy to talk, or alternatively we can come out to visit you.

Who can I talk to?

Either contact your local Land Management Advisor or call:

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<th>Tash Styles</th>
<th>Katrina Smith</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>(Riparian Programme Coordinator)</td>
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