

Waihora Stream

Streams alive!

What is *Streams alive?*

Streams alive is Greater Wellington's streamside assistance programme for high value stream catchments. It's part of our biodiversity programme to halt the continuing loss of species and ecosystems around the region.

Through the programme we support landowners who want to plant the stream margins on their property. The 12 catchments in the *Streams alive* programme are:-

Waitohu Stream

Otaki River

Ration Creek

Karori Stream

Wainuiomata River

Mangaroa River

Owhanga Stream

Upper Waiohine River

Upper Ruamahanga River

Kaiwhata River

Waihora Stream

Glendhu Creek

Greater Wellington has chosen the Waihora Stream as part of the *Streams alive* programme because streamside planting in just a few areas will make a difference to the overall ecological health of the stream.

The variety of stream types, geology and climate influences in this catchment help complete the range represented in the *Streams alive* programme. As a whole the programme covers the full range of stream and ecosystem types present in the region.

Waihora is unusual in the lower Wairarapa valley because of its largely unmodified catchment. The upper catchment is cloaked in the species-rich Haurangi State Forest Park. Here the stream is clean and well-shaded and provides excellent habitat to support the freshwater fish and insects. Extending this native vegetation along a streamside corridor to the Lower Ruamahanga River will help restore the valuable link to sea so that migratory fish can negotiate the journey up and downstream.

The Waihora Stream is in the *Streams alive* programme because:

- over 85% of the 2,238 ha catchment is in native forest
- nearly 75% of the catchment is protected by covenants or in Department of Conservation ownership
- the variety of stream habitats in the



catchment provide home for a wide variety of native fish which are likely to include shortfin eel, longfin eel, giant kokopu, koaro, dwarf galaxias, banded kokopu, shortjaw kokopu, non-migratory bullies, common bully, bluegill bully, redfin bully, koura, and smelt

- evidence from streamside planting projects around the region indicates that if the few open areas of the stream are planted, there will be measurable improvements to its overall ecological health.



Male redfin bully



Weta by George Gibbs



Green punctatus gecko



Eel



Kereru

How Greater Wellington can help

Greater Wellington can help landowners in *Streams alive* catchments by:

- drawing up a stream plan with the landowner showing an agreed programme for planting the streams and other waterways on the property
- supplying native plants suited to local conditions
- paying contractors to plant the plants
- paying contractors to undertake weed control for two years after planting.

Greater Wellington will not provide plants if they would create a flood management problem.

What will you have to do?

Landowners will have to:

- permanently fence off a section of the stream that will allow between two and seven rows of native plants to become established
- keep planted areas free of stock.

What changes will you see?

After just a year without stock access, the stream banks will be more stable. After about four years the plants will be about as tall as a person and will be shading out the weeds, starting to shade the stream, and providing habitat for streamside life.

In the long term, not only will the stream be healthier and much more attractive, you will also see more native birds in the neighbourhood. The stream will have cleaner water that will be more palatable to stock. You may even find that the stream becomes a feature that adds value to your property.



Well-fenced plantings on a stream margin



A well-fenced section of a stream

More information

For more information on the *Streams alive* programme, contact Michelle Bird on 04 526 5323 or 0800 496 734, email riparian@gw.govt.nz or check out our website at www.gw.govt.nz/streams. If you are not in a *Streams alive* catchment, Greater Wellington staff are still available to offer advice and help you prepare a stream plan for your property.

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