

Owhiro Stream Information Day 25 March 2017

The following questions and suggestions were raised at the GWRC information day and are answered below.

At the previous meeting in late 2016, Regional Public Health (RPH) talked about additional monitoring that should be done in the stream. Should you talk to RPH with regard to any further proposed monitoring?

Jill McKenzie from RPH was at the meeting in late 2016. At that meeting she suggested undertaking monitoring in the stream that matched the monitoring being undertaken at T&T Landfill. Samples taken following incidents have 'mirrored' the sampling undertaken at the landfill. We continue to work with RPH regarding the proposed monitoring programme and discuss any key changes in contaminant concentrations with them. The information on precautionary measures regarding use and contact with the stream water on our webpage still apply <http://www.gw.govt.nz/t-and-t-landfill/>.

Can GWRC please provide more advanced warning about the open day?

We acknowledge a number of people commented that they would have liked more notice about the open day. We will do our best to provide as much notice as possible for future open days and are looking at ways we can better promote these open days.

Can you please provide an electronic copy of the map displayed at the open day?

Yes. The map available at the information day has been uploaded to our website. You can download it from here: <http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Resource-Consents/T--T/Owhiro-Catchment-Map.pdf>

Can you please provide a link to the Whaitua video?

Yes. Information about the Whaitua committees and a link to the video is available here <http://www.gw.govt.nz/whaitua-committees/>

Can you please share photos of the completed wetland?

Yes. Some photos of the completed wetland and the clean water diversions which are currently being constructed have been uploaded to our website. They can be viewed here <http://www.gw.govt.nz/t-and-t-landfill/>. Photos will continue to be uploaded as the wetland planting gets established and construction of the diversions progresses.

C&D Landfill have discharges from their site whenever it rains and sediment goes down the road. What is GWRC doing about this?

We are aware of reports of sediment coming down the access road from C and D Landfill. GWRC have worked with the landfill operators to ensure any discharges of sediment which may get to roads or the stormwater network are

minimised. Compliance inspections at C and D Landfill occur at least once a month. In addition, over the last year we've visited the site several times during periods of heavy rain to assess the water management systems in place. We are often reliant on the community to provide information about discharges when they are happening so we encourage people to call our environment hotline on 0800 496 734 when they see incidents so that we can investigate the source of any discharges.

There is a need to provide some education to the community about stormwater. A lot of people don't know that the stormwater ends up in streams and the coastal marine area. People think it goes to the sewer system. We need to look at clever communication via social media, local newspapers, neighbourly to educate the community. What education is the Regional Council doing?

We've produced and continue to distribute educational material about the stormwater network throughout the region and this is available on our website and promoted on our social media channels. We are also currently developing some education material specifically for the Owhiro catchment – watch this space!

We also continue to work with our partners to get the messages about stormwater across. Partners like Wellington Water Limited (WWL) also run a stormwater education programme as a requirement of the Wellington City Council's stormwater consents. This has previously involved mail outs, stocking pamphlets in DIY stores, visiting concreting and automotive repair companies, and the recent production of social media videos published on their Facebook page.

How do we get a rubbish reduction initiative started? A plastic bag free community (Owhiro bay, Island Bay, Houghton Bay and Brooklyn) would be great. Taking photos of plastic bags in the stream could help make the community aware of the issue.

This is a fantastic initiative which other communities (including Kelburn and Aro Valley) are also getting up and running. Wellington City Council (WCC) has a dedicated Waste Minimisation Manager and a Waste Educator who can provide really useful advice to help get this going. They also have a waste minimisation grant fund available for initiatives just like this. For further information and advice contact Wendy or Kelly on 04 383 7460 or waste.education@wcc.govt.nz.

How about having some photos of the Owhiro Stream origin and its history?

It would be great to know more about this idea. Could this be included on information boards next to the stream which Friends Of Owhiro Stream could help develop? Or would a web based resource be what you are after? We are keen to hear from you a bit more about this idea – send your thoughts through to notifications@gw.govt.nz

We want a clean marine reserve and clean swimming so will the work going on help achieve this?

Yes this is one of the messages that came through strongly in the survey results. We all want clean waterways and areas to swim in and this is what we hope to achieve through the work we (and you!) do.

How do we know if the material being monitored going into the landfill is all cleanfill?

All construction and demolition landfills within the region can only accept cleanfill material which is defined by the Ministry for the Environment guidelines <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/waste/guide-management-cleanfills>.

Conditions are included in the C and D Landfill resource consent which stipulates this requirement.

Conditions of consent also require construction and demolition landfill operators to record the material they accept and reject as well as the source and carrier of that material.

Our compliance team undertake compliance inspections to check that construction and demolition landfills are operating within their consent conditions.

While we can't be on the construction and demolition landfill sites (or any consented site) all the time there is a level of trust that those taking material to the landfill, and the landfill operators, are doing the right thing. If not, fines and convictions are an additional deterrence for them.

If you believe that a landfill is accepting material that it is not authorised to accept - please contact our Environment Hotline on 0800 496 734 with details of the material, who delivered it (the business and the vehicle registration) and when it was delivered. We need as much detail as possible so it can be investigated.

What further information is available such as data sharing and GIS layers, maps etc?

With regard to GIS layers, GWRC has public GIS maps which display a large amount of information about our region. The maps are available here <http://mapping.gw.govt.nz/>.

With regard to sharing monitoring data about water quality in your catchment, the raw data which is collected is relatively meaningless unless there is some interpretation provided of the information collected – i.e. what does it all mean? GWRC's Environmental Science Department are currently collating the monitoring data we currently have for the Owhiro catchment and putting together a report which provides an assessment of this information. Once we know more we will share this information with the Friends of Owhiro Stream as well as publishing it on our website

Stormwater quality is an issue so what are you doing about it?

In urban areas, roadside drains and the pipes that collect rainwater from buildings and yards typically discharge this water into local streams or the sea – including of course

the Owhiro Stream and Owhiro Bay. Any substance other than rainwater which enters a stormwater network can damage the environment. As well as monitoring and our compliance work, we are revisiting our education material about the stormwater network, where it ends up and what shouldn't be discharged to stormwater drains and pipes. Wellington Water Limited also has an educational role as network operators, and run a programme as part of WCC's stormwater consents. It's something we are constantly working on and everybody has a part to play in keeping our environment clean and healthy.

Owhiro stream is steep and flows rise quickly so why is flow sometimes a problem?

Urban development and the creation of hard impermeable surfaces can increase the amount of runoff from the land surface and therefore the amount of water in streams. These effects and the impacts on downstream communities are considered by Wellington City Council when they assess zoning changes and land development applications. The Owhiro catchment is relatively steep and the stream rises and falls quickly when it rains – this is just the nature of the natural environment we live in.

How about getting community gardens members doing some of the monitoring?

This is a great idea. There will be opportunities for community members to be involved in the monitoring. We're looking at establishing a citizen science project for the Owhiro Stream by the end of the year. In developing the scope for this monitoring we will consider the most appropriate places to undertake the monitoring.

GWRC is currently compiling a report of all the monitoring information we have for the Owhiro Catchment. We expect this report to be completed in July/August and will make it available to the public once finalised.

There is a need to ensure any data collected by the community is credible and can be used so how will the Regional Council make sure this happens?

This is absolutely integral to making sure that there is value in any monitoring undertaken. If community members are going to be undertaking monitoring of the stream we will ensure that there is information and training available to ensure it is done in line with best practice. There are some great experts in this particular catchment who have also offered their assistance with any monitoring programmes when they are established.

Where can I go to get more information?

We will continue to put regular updates on our website regarding T&T Landfill and diversion works, these updates can be found here <http://www.gw.govt.nz/t-and-t-landfill/>.

If you would like more information about the other topics discussed in this document, please contact us on notifications@gwrc.govt.nz.