

# Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region

## Water allocation



Water is essential to human survival and health. We use water for social, economic and recreational benefit. We must also safeguard the life-supporting capacity of water for aquatic ecosystems and the needs of future generations.

Care is needed when allocating water to ensure sufficient water remains in rivers and in the ground to meet the needs both of people and the aquatic species that depend on it. It is vital that water allocation is managed to strike the right balance between competing uses.

The amount of water available for use from rivers and aquifers in the Wellington region has approached full allocation in some areas. For example, the Ruamāhanga River, Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt River and the Waikanae River, including their directly connected groundwater, are fully allocated at times when river flows are low.

Greater Wellington Regional Council's existing Regional Freshwater Plan assumes that surface and groundwater systems are separate. Our science projects over the past 10 years have shown that many groundwater systems are directly connected to surface water.



### Core allocation

The proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region (proposed Plan) has established core allocation amounts that recognise the degree of connection between groundwater and surface water.

River water volume for aquatic ecosystems and recreational use is maintained by setting minimum river flows. Other than for the health needs of people, taking water from rivers and streams must cease when minimum flows are reached. A policy on flow variability ensures that flushing flows occur occasionally to avoid algae build up.

Region-wide default core allocation amounts apply to surface water systems for small

and large rivers. Specific allocation amounts have also been developed for groundwater systems that are not directly connected to surface water.

In water bodies where the new core allocation amounts are already exceeded by existing takes new allocations will be prohibited but existing takes will be allowed to continue.

### 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](mailto: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.