

## Minimising risk

A stream or river may damage your land or property, particularly during a flood event, by:

- Flooding land
- Eroding land or causing washouts at structures
- Causing loss of bankside vegetation
- Depositing debris
- Gravel or sediment building up in the channel

There are measures you can take to reduce the risk of flooding and erosion or to repair the damage. These include:

- Locating assets outside of the flood risk area
- Flood-proofing buildings
- Keeping the watercourse free from obstruction
- Bank-edge planting with appropriate species
- A range of other techniques for bank stabilisation

Greater Wellington provides free advice to help landowners mitigate and repair damage from watercourses on their properties. Contact Greater Wellington Environmental Regulation helpdesk. Telephone: 0800 496 734

# Watercourses and you

## A landowner's guide

Water, air, earth and energy – elements in Greater Wellington's logo that combine to create and sustain life. Greater Wellington promotes **Quality for Life** by ensuring our environment is protected while meeting the economic, cultural and social needs of the community



### For more information, contact:

Greater Wellington  
142 Wakefield Street  
PO Box 11646  
Wellington 6142  
T 04 384 5708  
F 04 385 6960

Published July 2007  
GW/ENV-G-07/119

info@gw.govt.nz  
www.gw.govt.nz

## The purpose of these guidelines

These guidelines are intended to provide advice on what you can do to manage your watercourse (river, stream, creek or drain)

## What are your responsibilities?

As a landowner, you are generally responsible for normal maintenance of watercourses on and around your property. This includes maintaining the watercourse free from obstruction so that water can drain away quickly. For example, removal of fallen trees blocking a stream.



All landowners need to be aware that 'drains' are also watercourses.

Some watercourses, particularly in urban areas are maintained by your regional or local council. Check this with Greater Wellington or your local council when considering any work.

## Watercourse management

Good watercourse management will help to protect your property and land from damage while providing for a sustainable environment.

Good practices for managing watercourses include:

- Stock management/exclusion
- Pest (plant and animal) control
- Riparian set-back, planting and fencing
- Clearing obstructions
- Allowing room for watercourses to meander

Greater Wellington has people with the expertise and experience to help you manage watercourses on your property. We offer advice and, where available, links to funding.

You may also find useful information on looking after urban and rural streams in Greater Wellington's booklet *Mind the stream*



## Resource consent required for work in watercourses

If you are planning work that may affect the banks or bed of a watercourse, including repairing flood damage and making improvements to your property, you will probably need resource consent.

Examples of works that will need resource consent/s are:

- Forming a crossing or disturbing the watercourse e.g. to place a culvert
- Extracting, damming, or diverting water e.g. damming a stream to make a pond or straightening a channel
- Clearing vegetation and/or gravel and sediment from within the channel of a watercourse

Examples of works not likely to need resource consent are:

- Minor maintenance of an existing lawful structure
- Removing fallen trees or removing vegetation outside the channel of the watercourse

**Check your consent requirements with Greater Wellington Environmental Regulation**

Some local councils also require resource consent for work in or next to watercourses. Check directly with your local council.