

Otaki River

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 Otaki River as part of the *Streams alive* programme because streamside planting in streams that flow into the lower section of the river 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.

The Otaki River, on the Kapiti Coast, covers a large catchment and flows through Otaki township. Its headwaters, located in the Tararua forest, are shaded by native bush providing excellent living conditions for a variety of native fish and insects. However, many of the small streams which run into the Otaki River do not provide good quality living conditions for fish and insects. To improve this situation Greater Wellington has classified the small streams that flow into the Otaki River as a priority for stream-side planting, rather than the main river.

These streams are in the *Streams alive* programme because:

- Nearly 90% of its 34,788 ha catchment is in native vegetation



- Over 75% of the catchment is protected by covenants
- 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, torrentfish, giant kokopu, koaro, dwarf galaxies, banded kokopu, inanga, shortjaw kokopu, lamprey, common bully, giant 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 river 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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