

Report 09.08
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Committee Catchment Management
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Streams Alive – Review of Progress

1. Purpose

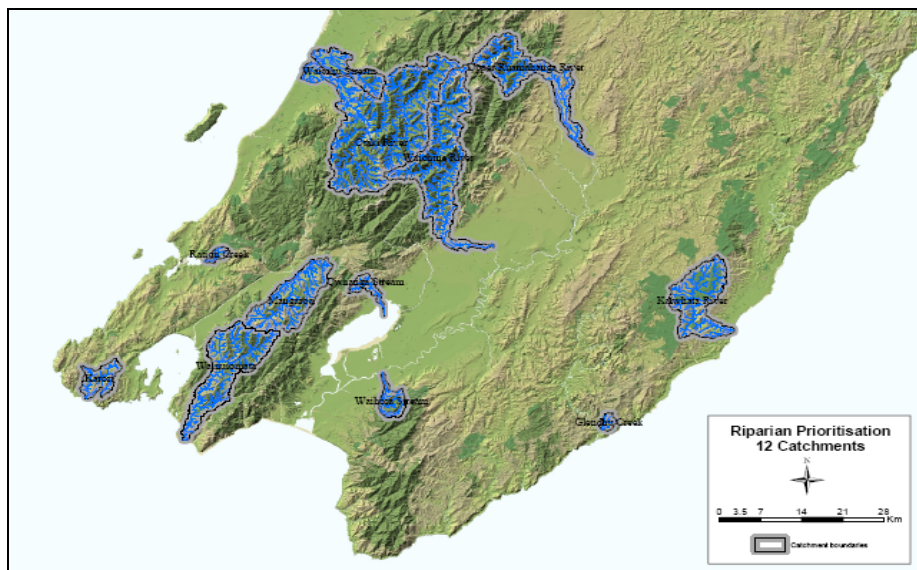
To inform the Committee of the key findings in the review of Streams Alive and present opportunities for future improvements to the programme.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

Streams Alive is a riparian incentive programme for private landowners located in twelve priority catchments throughout the Wellington Region. The catchments are Mangaroa, Wainuiomata, Otaki, Waitohu, Upper Ruamahanga, Kaiwhata, Glendhu, Owhanga, Waihora, Upper Waiohine, Ration Creek and Karori.



Each of the streams in the programme

- Has at least 40% of the catchment in good condition with high ecological value
- Can support a variety of aquatic life
- Offers opportunities for establishing or extending natural bush corridors from the mountains to the sea
- Contains some degraded stream sections that can be rehabilitated by streamside restoration

In each of the twelve catchments landowners are provided with comprehensive advice, as well as full funding of weed control (for two years after planting), native plants and contract planting labour. The landowner provides the land and any necessary fencing.

A non-targeted or reactive approach to promotion of the programme has been employed. Promotion is generally by word of mouth or through ad hoc contact with staff. In this regard public expectations have been managed to meet current GW budgets and resources, however progress is very pedestrian.

4. Key Results

- 61% of the participants are lifestyle block owners.
- Less than half of the selected catchments are actively participating - between 2004 and 2007 a total of 13.2km was planted in eight of the twelve catchments. 10.8km or 81% was completed in four of the twelve catchments. The Mangaroa catchment has 5.6km or 42% of the planting.
- Information about the programme is largely gained through contact with GW staff and neighbours – 79% of the participants heard about the programmes from these sources.
- A strong ethic amongst participants to manage streams for environmental reasons – 57% of the respondents got involved primarily for stream habitat, bird life, reduced weeds, beautification or biodiversity reasons.
- Landowners value the service and the level of assistance – 87% of those surveyed described the service as ‘good’ or ‘very good’, and 96% rated the level of assistance as ‘sufficient’ or ‘more than enough’.
- Knowledge on riparian management and new skills have been imparted to landowners – this is especially in relation to native plant selection and identification, and understanding stream biodiversity.

- Landowners seek greater engagement and involvement in the programme – results show that landowners are prepared to have greater involvement in the planning stages, are prepared to undertake training to assist with planting and spraying, and seek more feedback from staff on progress.
- Streams Alive is providing a much needed and sought after service to residents in four of the selected catchments.
- Key areas for improvement relate to weed control, plant survival, expectations of the programme, and catchment management.
- Streams Alive has made fair progress in creating ecological linkages within the existing budget. Progress is good in the Mangaroa catchment. The current target of 4 km per year is not being met, with two thirds of the catchments returning very poor rates of progress.
- The operational budget is currently insufficient to meet the goals of the Riparian Strategy, with specific reference to improving water quality, improving aquatic habitat, providing healthier ecosystems, and building ecological links through the wider landscape and halting of the regional biodiversity decline.

5. Opportunities

5.1 Current (2008/09)

These opportunities can be achieved with current staff levels and within the current budget.

- (a) Continue with the existing fixed term contract to maintain staffing levels at 1.4 FTE until 30 June 2009.
- (b) Develop a Streams Alive application and approval process to clarify the responsibilities and obligations of Greater Wellington and landowners.
- (c) Determine biodiversity and social goals and objectives for the Streams Alive programme, based on relevant Greater Wellington policy documents.
- (d) Work with Greater Wellington Biosecurity team to establish a shared annual work programme for long term external weed control.
- (e) Develop stronger working relationships with other Greater Wellington teams working in Streams Alive catchments on ecosystem enhancement.

- (f) Audit planting sites on an annual basis to identify ways to improve plant survival and achieve canopy closure.
- (g) Increase the quality of ecosourced plants by developing long-term relationships with local nurseries to provide top quality ecosourced plants.

5.2 Future (2009/10 and beyond)

These opportunities can be achieved with additional money provided for staff time and operational expenditure, and would focus on long term riparian planning across Council.

- (h) Increase the operational budget to meet the goals and outcomes of the Riparian Strategy and landowner expectations.
- (i) Increase staffing levels to 2.0 FTE to achieve the goals and outcomes of the Riparian Strategy and landowner expectations.
- (j) Establish and implement monitoring to measure progress towards the Streams Alive biodiversity and social goals.
- (k) Develop and implement feedback and training for landowners, including an e-newsletter and on-site riparian training.
- (l) Progress with linkages between Streams Alive and other Greater Wellington programmes such as the Land Management soil erosion programmes, Queen Elizabeth II Trust covenant programme, Wetland Incentive Programme, Take Care programmes, Key Native Ecosystems Programme and other incentive programmes.
- (m) Progress with long-term riparian planning across the Greater Wellington Region.
- (n) Provide low cost plants for landowners involved in Greater Wellington incentive programmes.
- (o) Review the Streams Alive catchments to consider if other catchments would be more suitable.

6. Funding Implications

There are funding implications for Greater Wellington contained in the opportunities listed above. It was proposed to request additional funding in the 2009 – 19 LTCCP. However resource limitations prevented this progressing. Funding opportunities will be explored annually and at the next LTCCP review.

7. Communication

Limited communication opportunities exist at present. The programme outputs currently meet landowner expectations. Promotion of the Streams Alive

programme will raise expectations and the service delivery capacity is currently fully committed.

Should additional funding be received, then opportunities to review catchment selection, increased funding and resources, and provide specialised promotion and communications will be actioned.

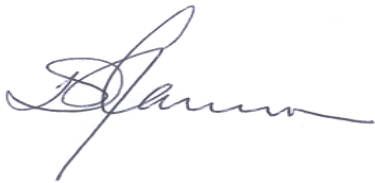
8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the Review opportunities.***

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:



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