



Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Updated Streamside Maintenance Policy provides clarification for property owners

At its Regular Meeting of April 12, 2021, Council adopted a Streamside Maintenance Policy for streams within the City's municipal boundary. The policy replaces two former policies related to *work in or about streams* and *creek channel maintenance*, which referenced outdated language and provincial legislation.

In British Columbia, the *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA) regulates and applies to any [work in and about a stream](#). The *Riparian Areas Protection Regulation* protects the many and varied features, functions and conditions that are vital for maintaining stream health and productivity. Riparian areas link water to land. These lands border streams, lakes and wetlands. Streams are Crown land and are not the property of the City. Therefore, the City cannot approve work to take place in or about a stream.

"Each year, the City receives inquiries from residents about who owns creek channels and who is responsible for maintenance or bank stabilization on properties adjacent to creeks or streams," said Mayor Victor Cumming. "The intention of this updated policy is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of private property owners, the local government, and the provincial government, to help our citizens know where to find the information they need if they have questions or concerns."

Private property owners are responsible for protecting their property from flood and flood related risks. If property owners or the general public have a request regarding tree or vegetation maintenance, bank stabilization or the removal of debris in or about a stream, the City will direct the inquiries to the appropriate agency for approval.

"Private property owners may be required to engage a qualified professional and obtain permits from the Province to address their concerns," said Mayor Cumming. "The same conditions apply to the City."

As the weather continues to warm up and we prepare for the spring freshet season, the City encourages all property owners adjacent to creeks and streams to consider whether they are prepared for rising water levels and what steps they may need to take to maintain and protect their property.

Sand and sandbags are available for public use at the City of Vernon Operations building (1900 48th Avenue). Residents are reminded to bring their own shovel to fill sandbags and are asked to follow all COVID-19 safety protocols.

[PreparedBC](#) provides information to help prepare and protect yourself, your family, and your property for the potential of flooding, as well as information you may need to consider with your insurance provider related to flood protection. *It is important to note the Province has advised that if a household could have reasonably and readily purchased overland flood insurance and did not, disaster financial assistance may not be available.*

“We never know when an emergency may take place, so now is the time to prepare ourselves to face the unknown,” said Mayor Cumming. “The more emergency preparedness work we do today, the better we’ll be able to adapt to changing conditions later as a stronger and more resilient community.”