



Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Streamside maintenance reminders for Vernon property owners

While we continue to prepare for spring freshet in the North Okanagan, the City is offering some reminders for Vernon property owners about streamside maintenance and who's responsible for protecting private property.

In 2021, Council adopted a Streamside Maintenance Policy for streams within the City's municipal boundary. The policy replaced two former policies related to *work in or about streams* and *creek channel maintenance*, which referenced outdated language and provincial legislation.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* (RAPR) 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. Both the WSA and RAPR are regulated by the provincial government and not municipalities. 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. The intention of the updated policy was 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. The same conditions apply to the City.

If residents are conducting yard maintenance on their properties, they're reminded to discard branches and pruning material properly, and not to place this material in creek channels, where it could become a hazard.

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 mitigate risk and protect their property.

Sand and sandbags are available for public use at the City of Vernon Operations building (1900 48th Avenue). The sand pile and sand bags are located outside the east entrance to the operations yard located on Pleasant Valley Road. Residents are reminded to bring their own shovel to fill sandbags.

[PreparedBC](#) provides information to help prepare and protect yourself, your family, and your property from potential flooding. It also provides flood protection information you may need to consider, in consultation with your home insurance provider.

If you are near a stream or waterway, please exercise caution and stay away from creekbanks, particularly with children or animals. For more information from the BC River Forecast Centre regarding spring freshet and snow conditions, please visit the [Province's website](#).