

IMPORTANT NOTICE

WATER RESTRICTIONS UPDATE #10

IRRIGATION SUPPLY WILL CEASE ON WED 25TH FEBRUARY

We have reached the bottom of the bucket. By Wednesday the lake will be at 371m with a little under 15% storage remaining. As part of the agreement to reduce the minimum river flows in early February, we will cease irrigation and the last remaining storage will be used to try and keep the river flowing for the next 10 -12 days.

Please plan to shut off your irrigation systems this Wednesday.

WATER STORAGE SITUATION

The lake level is currently at 371.7m (2.6%) and falling at around 0.55% daily.

We are releasing around 5.3 cumecs from the dam to provide for irrigation and to maintain the revised minimum flow of 2.5 cumecs.

There have been several small rain events in the area over the last fortnight but they have had very little effect on inflows to the dam and in the catchment generally.

The Opipi river mouth has just opened (Sunday night) after the lagoon had been at a very high level for several weeks. This will assist in freshening up the water in the lagoon but with the river flows being so low, it is highly likely that any stormy sea conditions may close the mouth again.

PROPOSED RESTRICTIONS

All irrigation is to cease on Wednesday 25th February and everyone should plan to be shut down by 6pm.

Steve and the Ops team will need to manage the shutdown of the schemes (Kakahu, Totara Valley and Levels) to ensure we maintain the required river flows while preserving as much water as we can.

Please note that some of you within the schemes will be required to shut off before 6pm. Steve will advise you tomorrow (Tuesday) if you will need to shut down earlier.

For those of you that operate under your own consent, you will also be required to shut down on Wednesday and, at this stage, remain off until further notice.

Up until the Wednesday shutdown, we require all irrigators to remain on their current 50% restriction or roster.

As mentioned in my previous notices, irrigators need to anticipate that they will not be able to irrigate for a significant period once we are shut down and that this may extend right through March.

We have an OEFRAg meeting on Tuesday afternoon where we will be looking to establish some guidelines on the recovery phase and how we can provide the earliest opportunity for some limited resumption of irrigation supply at least. I will update you of any relevant outcomes from that meeting.

WATER ORDERS

We will be going through the system and cancelling all water orders to reflect the Wednesday shut off.

STOCK WATER SUPPLIES

After my message last notice, we have had a few farmers come back to us regarding the impact stopping irrigation will have on their stockwater supplies and we are working with them to identify some possible options and solutions.

If there are others that anticipate that a shutdown of the irrigation schemes will compromise their ability to provide essential water supply to their stock, please contact our office.

MAINTENANCE AT THE LAKE

With the large expanse of lake bed that has been exposed, we have been looking at opportunities for maintenance in the area.

Clearing of tree stumps – while the trees were all trimmed back to an agreed level before the original lake level, there are some in the shallower areas, especially near Bennetts Corner that we would like to remove to improve the recreational amenity. We have made an initial approach to a local contractor but I have also been approached by a shareholder suggesting that it would be a good opportunity to organise a fairly large ‘working bee’ with those who are willing providing some time and suitable plant and equipment. We would be keen to hear from anyone who could help out to assess whether this is feasible.

Dig a Bigger Hole! – I have been asked whether we should be getting in a creating more storage by excavating the lake bed. My initial assessment suggests that this would not be economic - we are currently releasing about 300,000m³/day from the lake and I estimate it would cost around \$1 million to excavate that volume. I will check my assumptions and maths.

Annual Dam Safety Inspection – we have brought forward our annual inspection so that we can include a close look at the upstream face which is normally submerged.

Maintenance on the Intake Tower – at our major inspection in June 2013, we identified that some of the bolts on the tower structure were starting to corrode and we will be revisiting the tower to replace any bolts that are now exposed and accessible above the waterline.

Tree Harvesting – Steve is getting some advice on the economics of harvesting some or all of the trees on the island in the lake (it is currently possible to drive onto the island from the old Opipi Gorge Rd).

RURAL SUPPORT TRUST

A reminder that one of the key networks/agencies that you should all be aware of is the Rural Support Trust.



0800 787 254

www.southcanterbury.rural-support.org.nz

The unique circumstances of rural life can only be truly understood by rural people who share the same challenges.



"When circumstances beyond your control lead to a rural crisis, be it climatic, environmental, financial or personal, the South Canterbury Rural Support Trust is ready to assist. The Trust members are local people with extensive rural knowledge and experience."

The Rural Support Trust is one of the organisations that does receive additional resourcing and funding under the government's adverse event announcement (drought declaration) to enable them to support farmers in their local community and their knowhow includes connecting farmers with the right agencies who can provide expert support and assistance. Please consider making contact with the Rural Support Trust at the earliest opportunity.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink.

Tony McCormick
Ph 027 233 0412
tony@opuha.co.nz

DROUGHT BUSTER GET TOGETHER

I have just been advised that there is an event being planned for the afternoon of Friday 27th March at the Mackenzie Rugby Club in Fairlie. I understand this event is being coordinated by the Fairlie Lions in conjunction with the Rural Support Trust and I am sure will be supported by many other groups and entities like the Rugby Club, Opuha Water and the industry groups. This will be a family event to provide an opportunity for people to meet on an informal basis to discuss (or maybe even forget about for a while) the severe conditions we are experiencing.

