

IMPORTANT NOTICE

WATER RESTRICTIONS UPDATE #6

I feel we perhaps should reserve any thoughts of 'Happy New Year' until we are able to stand in our front paddock and sing it in the rain!? But then that appears, at the moment, to possibly be some time away unfortunately. Happy New Year to you all in any case.

We are currently operating under a 25% restriction regime however the lake level is still declining and we will hit our next trigger level of 25% full next week. We need to therefore prepare to revert to 50% restrictions from 6am next Wednesday 14th January.

Please be prepared to revert to a 50% restriction regime from Wednesday 14th January.

WATER STORAGE SITUATION

The lake level is currently at 381.3m (31.6%) and falling at around 0.75% every day.

We have actually had to increase the release from the lake over the last week to compensate for the sharp drop off of flows from the other river tributaries such as the Te Ngawai and Opihi Rivers. Irrigators on these rivers (Opihi above Raincliff) are now on full restriction and similar restrictions for those above the dam are imminent.

The reduction in these river flows and increased releases from the lake to compensate have brought forward our forecast of reaching 25% lake level by about four days.

The minimum environmental flow in the river at Saleyards Bridge for January and February is 3.5 cumecs. We had agreement to run to these low flows for the latter part of December (instead of 6 cumecs) and we were able to retain this difference in the lake and extend the storage by approximately 11 days. There is little room to reduce the minimum river flows below the current 3.5 cumecs although I think even this may need to be reviewed if the situation does not improve by the end of this month. It is in the interest of all parties that we avoid an empty lake scenario whereby the river flows revert to natural inflows and there is no water available for abstractive use (except for essential domestic supply).

The Timaru District Council are expecting to move to a higher level of water supply restrictions in their area this week.

The next lake trigger level is at 10% full (375m). If we reach this level, then it is likely that we will move to a 75% restriction level. We realise this is a very dire situation, however on our current forecast we may reach this level around 12th February.

PROPOSED RESTRICTIONS

The 50% restriction regime will be managed in the same way as we had in December.

Those who can manage their water take to be no more than 50% at a steady rate will be expected to do so.

For those on a roster regime, it will be a four days on – four days off roster. (4 on / 4 off)

Our Operations team will prepare a roster schedule, taking account as best they can of where you are in the current 25% regime, and will advise you of your roster days. We will prepare your water orders on this basis.

As previously, if anyone that was on a roster regime, now feel

they can regulate their water take to a steady reduced rate and wish to come off the roster, please advise the office before Monday. (preferably email to office@opuha.co.nz, otherwise phone in on the Water Phone 021 433 522 or office 03 614 7801).

Please note that without significant rain, this 50% regime is likely to remain in place for at least four weeks.

WATER ORDERING

As always, to be able to manage the restriction regime effectively and actually reduce the draw on dam storage, it is critical that irrigators maintain accurate water orders with the office so that we can determine the right amount water that must be released from the dam.

Please ensure that your water orders accurately reflect your intended water use so that we can deliver the right amount of water and limit wastage and/or situations where insufficient water is available to you or other users.

DIDYMO

We are experiencing some operational challenges with the high level of didymo from the upper reaches of the Opuha River this season that carries downstream. The screens at Kakahu and Totara Valley intakes are requiring regular attention from the Operations team to clear the didymo debris. We are also aware that there is some carry over into the schemes and that irrigators will need to be keeping a close eye on their own offtakes, screens and irrigators. The same applies to those drawing directly from the river.

IF CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE ...

As always, if we are fortunate enough to get sufficient rain to relieve our concerns over our storage, we will review the level of restrictions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

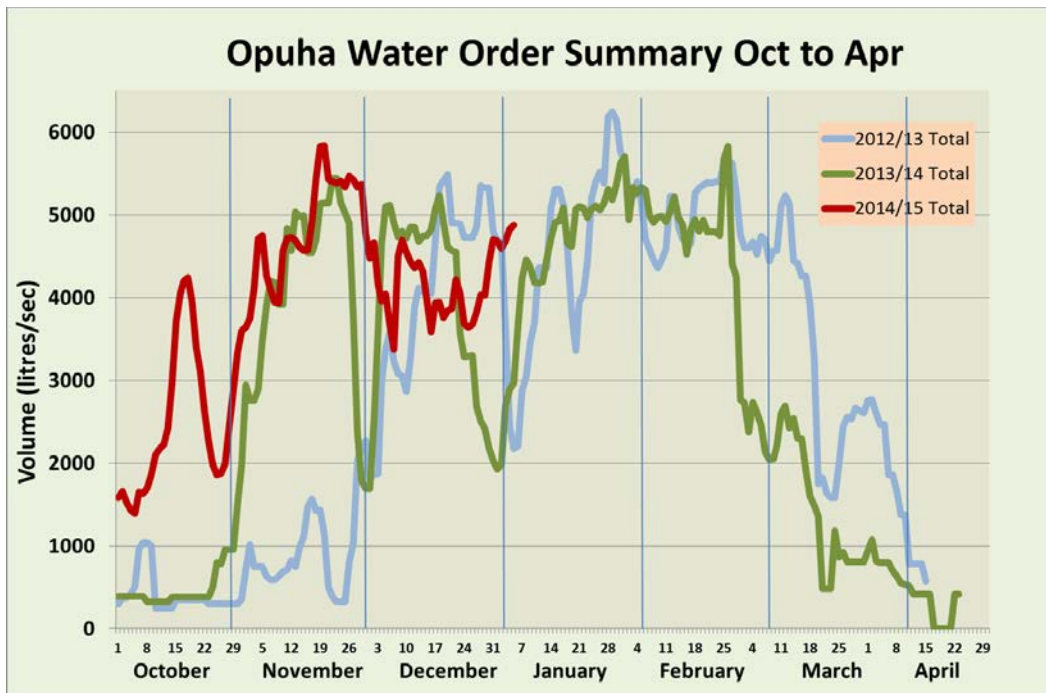
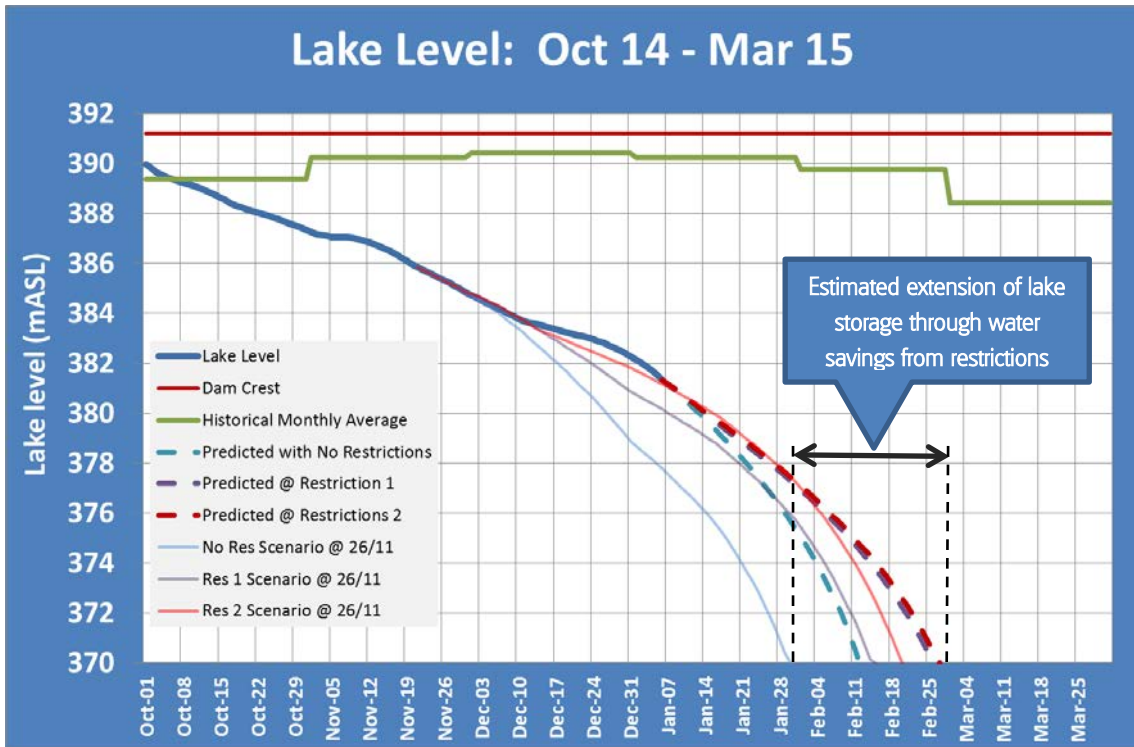
Please contact the office (phone or email), if you have any questions or require any further information in preparing for the restriction regime.

The key thing is to ensure your water orders are accurate.

Regards



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



These photos were taken before Xmas with the lake at 383m – it is now 1.7m lower