

# Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan

## What it means for you

The Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) is now legally effective and has an immediate impact for those contemplating a change in land use or farming operation that may lead to an increase in nitrogen loss. Activities that have previously been considered 'normal' developments, such as transferring shares or winter grazing, now need to be assessed to determine whether your nitrogen loss will increase and therefore whether that activity or change is permitted, prohibited, or a consent is required.

**It is essential that all shareholders understand the LWRP, and what it means to your farming business, now and in the future.**

Opuha Water Ltd is holding information sessions in Pleasant Point, Fairlie and Hilton in coordination with Environment Canterbury. You are strongly encouraged to attend one of these sessions so you can stay informed about what it means for you, and so you are aware of how OWL are responding to the new rules.

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May, Pleasant Point Rugby Clubrooms, 1-3pm & 7-9pm**

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May, Fairlie Fire Station, 1-3pm**

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May, Hilton Hall, 7-9pm**

(this meeting will focus on the 'red zone' rules)

Please contact Julia Crossman, if you would like further information about the information sessions or about the Land and Water Regional Plan in general. Please see overleaf for information on the LWRP provided in the last OWL newsletter.



**Environmental Manager**

[julia@opuha.co.nz](mailto:julia@opuha.co.nz)

Ph 021 535 174

## ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE

This newsletter gives me a good opportunity to introduce myself, as the new Environmental Manager for Opuha Water Ltd. In my previous life I worked at ECan in both the land management and planning teams, where I was actively involved in both the development and implementation of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy. It is exciting for me to be able to bring that experience to OWL and I am really looking forward to working with you to facilitate improved environmental outcomes within the scheme and on-farm.

One of my first tasks has been to assess the implications and opportunities of the new Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) for our shareholders and for the scheme as a whole. The LWRP is now legally effective and so has an immediate impact for those contemplating a change in land use that may lead to an increase in nitrogen loss.

You will appreciate there is a lot to tell in this space, so consider this newsletter an introduction to the LWRP, that I will build on in future newsletters, on the website and at information sessions around the catchment. More fact sheets and information about what OWL are doing in response to the LWRP will be on the website [www.opuhawater.co.nz](http://www.opuhawater.co.nz) shortly, and I encourage you to have a look at this.

*Julia Crossman*

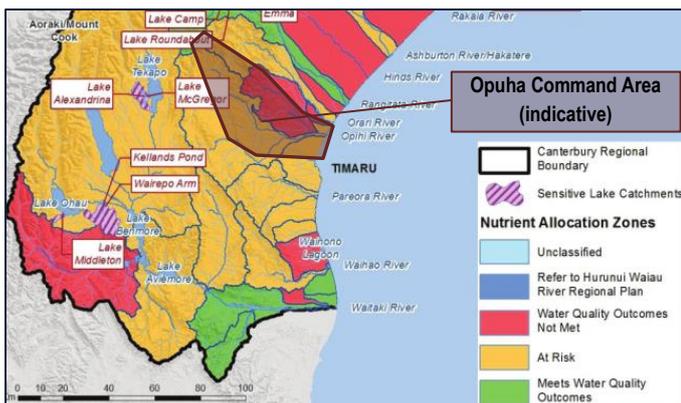
Environmental Manager

[julia@opuha.co.nz](mailto:julia@opuha.co.nz); Ph 021 535 174

### Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP)

Canterbury has been categorised into Nutrient Allocation Zones which indicate where the water quality outcomes are or are not being met. The rules in the LWRP regulate nitrogen leaching according to these zones.

Within the OWL command area there are both Orange (Opihi) and Red (Temuka incl. Kakahu) Nutrient Allocation Zones.



Across ALL Nutrient Allocation Zones, farms less than 5ha, or farms leaching less than 10kgN/ha/yr are a permitted land use. All other farms are regulated by the rules which apply for that particular Nutrient Allocation Zone.

Two important concepts to understand when looking at the rules are the Nitrogen Baseline and the Nitrogen Loss Calculation:

**Nitrogen Baseline:** The mean discharge of nitrogen below the root zone over the period 1 July 2009 - 30 June 2013, modelled with OVERSEER® and expressed in kgN/ha/yr.

**Nitrogen Loss Calculation:** The discharge of nitrogen below the root zone, as modelled with OVERSEER®, averaged over the most recent four year 01 July to 30 June period and expressed in kgN/ha/yr.

ALL farms larger than 5ha must establish a nitrogen baseline and it is important that it is robust and accurate. Your nitrogen baseline has significant implications for the future management of your land and options for the future.

In a **RED** Nutrient Allocation Zone, there is no flexibility to leach beyond the nitrogen baseline– that is, any increase in N loss is a prohibited activity. This does not prevent development, but it does mean that any development cannot cause an increase in nitrogen loss i.e. other on-farm mitigations may need to be introduced. All farms leaching more than 20kgN/ha/yr will need a consent by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, and a Farm Environment Plan (FEP) will need to accompany that consent application. The 20kgN/ha/yr is a threshold, not a limit; the limit is the baseline i.e. a farm leaching 40kgN/ha/yr can continue to operate as long as losses do not increase above the baseline and they hold a land use consent and FEP post January 2017.

There is greater flexibility in the **ORANGE** Nutrient Allocation Zone for development or intensification beyond the nitrogen baseline.

- Farms leaching less than 20kgN/ha/yr are Permitted if farm information is recorded (FEP preferably).
- Farms leaching more than 20kgN/ha/yr are Permitted provided the property is smaller than 50ha and there is no increase in nitrogen leaching above the baseline.
- All other farms leaching more than 20kgN/ha/yr are Permitted until 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 provided any increase in nitrogen leaching is limited to less than 5kgN/ha/yr.
- Farms leaching more than 20kgN/ha/yr will need a consent and FEP by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, if their property is over 50ha or if they increase their nitrogen loss above the baseline.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

- Know what Nutrient Allocation Zone your farm is in. If you are near the boundary of the Opihi and Temuka Nutrient Allocation Zone, go to the webpage <http://files.ecan.govt.nz/public/lwrp/council/lwrp-intro-legend-page.pdf> for more detailed maps, or contact Julia.
- All shareholders with farms larger than 5ha need to work out your nitrogen baseline. First you need to collate the information you need to populate OVERSEER for the four baseline years 2009-2013, including production (crop yields, stock numbers, wool weights, selling weights, milk solids etc); fertiliser (amounts, where when and how applied); and supplements bought or sold.
- If you are contemplating a change to your farming operation, such as transferring shares or winter grazing, you need assess whether it will increase your nitrogen loss calculation above your baseline and therefore whether that change is permitted, prohibited, or a consent is required.
- All farms requiring a consent must prepare a Farm Environment Plan as part of their consent application. OWL will be able to assist you in this, so keep an eye out over the next few months for information regarding the Farm Environment Plan rollout.