

Report to Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee
Stephen Thawley, Resource Advisor, Planning and Resources

Water Take Compliance Monitoring

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee of the compliance monitoring of water takes for the 1998/99 year.

2. Background

2.1 Under the Resource Management Charging Policy, the following water takes are required to be inspected:

- all large takes greater than 40 litres/sec
- moderate size takes greater than 15 litres/sec in stressed surface water catchments
- all new water takes

2.2 Also monitoring of low flows in rivers and streams is required, and where appropriate the implementation of water restrictions or bans may be necessary.

3. Inspections

3.1 In total 45 inspections of water takes were completed during the summer period between January and March.

3.2 Generally the level of compliance was good, particularly with irrigation takes. Three of the six water races in the Wairarapa breached maximum limits in their resource consents. The Regional Council is actively encouraging better monitoring regimes for the water races including the installation of monitoring sites with staff gauges to measure flow in the water races.

4. Low Flows

- 4.1 Due to below average rainfall in the Tararua Ranges over the summer period, rivers and streams in the Wairarapa basin recorded significant low flows. In particular the upper Ruamahanga River fell below a 1 day 10 year low flow (the flow recorded for one day once every ten years). Many other watercourses fell below their mean annual low flow.
- 4.2 As a consequence of the low flows experienced, many water use restrictions and in some cases irrigation bans were applied in various catchments. Restrictions and bans were imposed on the Kopuaranga, Ruamahanga, Waingawa, Parkvale, Taueru, and Otakura catchments. The level of compliance during restriction periods was excellent. There were no instances of non-compliance recorded during these periods.

5. Non-Compliance

- 5.1 Two abatement notices were issued for non-compliance. An abatement notice was issued to a District Council after their staff repeatedly failed to reduce the amount of water taken for one of the region's water races to an appropriate restriction level when requested. An abatement notice was also issued to a landowner who did not have a resource consent for taking water from a bore for irrigation purposes. Both parties complied with the action requested in the abatement notices.

6. Recommendation

That the report be received and the information noted.

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission by:

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