



1.0 Improving Summer Flows

The use and protection of the Tukituki River has long been a topic of debate.

Since 2008 Hawke's Bay Regional Council has been working on a range of plans and actions in the catchment to provide positive environmental, social, cultural and economic outcomes for the region, now and into the future.

A combination of water storage and higher minimum flows set by HBRC will release the potential for the Lower Tukituki River to be returned to more natural flows in summer, especially if current irrigators can be moved to storage.

A significant amount of work has gone into a wide range of investigations assessing the possibility of large-scale water storage in the Ruataniwha basin. The scheme, coupled with the Proposed Tukituki Plan Change provisions aims to improve water security for farmers, unlock economic potential for Hawke's Bay and improve water quality and quantity in the Tukituki River.

Improving summer flows

During the last five years Hawke's Bay Regional Council has invested significant time and money to better understand the quality and quantity of the water that flows down the Tukituki River.

Research shows raising the flows in the Tukituki River would have a negative impact on current irrigators, which is why HBRC began looking at water storage. The concept is simple - store winter water to use in the dry summer months, taking the pressure off the Tukituki River.

This research has shown ongoing droughts, drawing of water for irrigation and wastewater discharges have all affected the river. This also highlighted the need to look into new options for water management

What's driving the need to increase minimum flows?

The need to increase the minimum flows in the Tukituki River is driven by a number of factors.

- Current minimum flows are not adequate to protect fish habitat;
- A commitment to review the way we set minimum flows was made following appeals on the Regional Resource Management Plan in 2006;
- The Hawke's Bay community, including environmental interest groups, has expressed continuing concern since 2008 at low flows and water quality in the Tukituki River;
- The National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management requires councils to set water quality and quantity limits.

There are several advantages to having more water flow down the Tukituki River:

- A more attractive river to swim and fish in
- Maintenance and enhancement of the mauri of the river
- More water for the fish to swim in and more room to grow



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