



# water

• for the

# Waimea

# basin

Newsletter 11 • November – December 2009

## Waimea Water Augmentation Committee (WWAC)

### Message from the Chairman

Lee Dam –  
Have your say

The Waimea Water Augmentation Committee (WWAC) has been working to find a solution to the acute water shortage on the Waimea Plains. Currently the available water is over-allocated by 36 percent to maintain bare minimum flows in the river of 500 litres per second. Higher flows, up to 1100 litres per second, are environmentally desirable, however the water over-allocation would exceed 60 percent to achieve this flow. If this situation is not addressed there could be serious environmental impacts on the Waimea River and the underground aquifers. There will also be serious economic impacts on the farmers, orchardists and market gardeners on the Plains who produce high value crops which are reliant on a reliable supply of water. Without that water some of those businesses will no longer be viable.

It is also important to remember this is not just a rural issue. The water shortage affects the urban and industrial water supply for Richmond and Brightwater. In both communities rationing has already occurred and demand for water continues to grow.

For this project to succeed it needs the support of the community. As chairman I believe WWAC has done an excellent job to date of ensuring the widest range of interest groups have been consulted and their concerns addressed. This inclusiveness is reflected in the membership of our committee, comprising representatives from iwi, Fish and Game, Department of Conservation, irrigators, councils and other water users. These people have committed enormous amounts of their own time to ensuring the success of this project and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their ongoing input.

It is my view that this project must succeed. To do nothing is not an option. Our region is growing and will continue to need more water. We know that weather patterns are changing and that will most likely mean extremes – such as more droughts. This is a long-term investment and I urge you to be mindful that this will serve us well beyond the current economic climate.

We are seeking support from the community and also invite you to ask any questions you may have.

**Murray King, Chairman,**  
**Waimea Water Augmentation Committee**



# Summary

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After five years of investigations WWAC has confirmed that a dam in the upper reaches of the Lee River is a feasible long-term solution that will provide security of supply, enhanced environmental flows, address the over-allocation and meet population growth needs. This dam would collect water in winter and during periods of high rainfall and release that water back into the river as required over dry periods. Because the area's water supply is derived from the rivers, which feed the underground aquifers across the plains, water would not need to be piped from the dam to its end users. The rivers and aquifers provide a natural piping system within the plains area.

WWAC has received government funding to assist with its investigations to date, from the Sustainable Farming Fund and more recently from the Community Irrigation Fund. The project has also received financial support from both Nelson and Tasman councils, Fish and Game and from irrigators and landowners on the Waimea Plains.

In-kind support has been received from iwi and the Department of Conservation.

If you would like further information, all of the previous newsletters and reports are available to download from the Tasman District Council website, visit [www.tasman.govt.nz/index.php?WaterforWaimeaBasin](http://www.tasman.govt.nz/index.php?WaterforWaimeaBasin).

You are also welcome to contact a member of the Waimea Water Augmentation Committee.

For this project to succeed it is important it has the support of the community it will service. This is your opportunity to provide feedback on the key issues and ask questions on areas of the project you are unsure about.



## i Key information

**Site confirmed** – just above Anslow Creek in the Lee Valley. This area is 3.5km beyond where public road access to the valley currently ends.

**Dam type** – concrete-faced rockfill construction.

**Storage capacity** –13 million cubic metres of water.

**Dam area** – about 70 hectares, plus buffer zones around the dam

**Future proofing** – while this storage dam will address the current over-allocation and environmental issues it will also meet the needs of both the urban and rural water users for the next 100 years.

**Hydro electricity** – there is a small potential to generate hydro electricity and this is being investigated.

**Dam construction** – the earliest possible start to construction would be late 2012. Construction is expected to take two years.

# Key issues

## Key issues yet to be resolved:

### ► Ownership and governance

WWAC's intention is for the dam to be a not for profit, community-owned facility. Over the next 12 months the committee will be working on options for the governance structure which will be done in consultation with the community.

### ► Recreation opportunities

The ability to augment the water supply will enhance the in-stream recreational opportunities in the Lee and Waimea Rivers. Because present road access to the dam site is via private land and through forestry it is not likely the public will normally be able to drive to the dam for recreational purposes. However, providing alternative foot access by way of what is currently a paper road in the valley floor is being investigated.

### ► Land acquisition

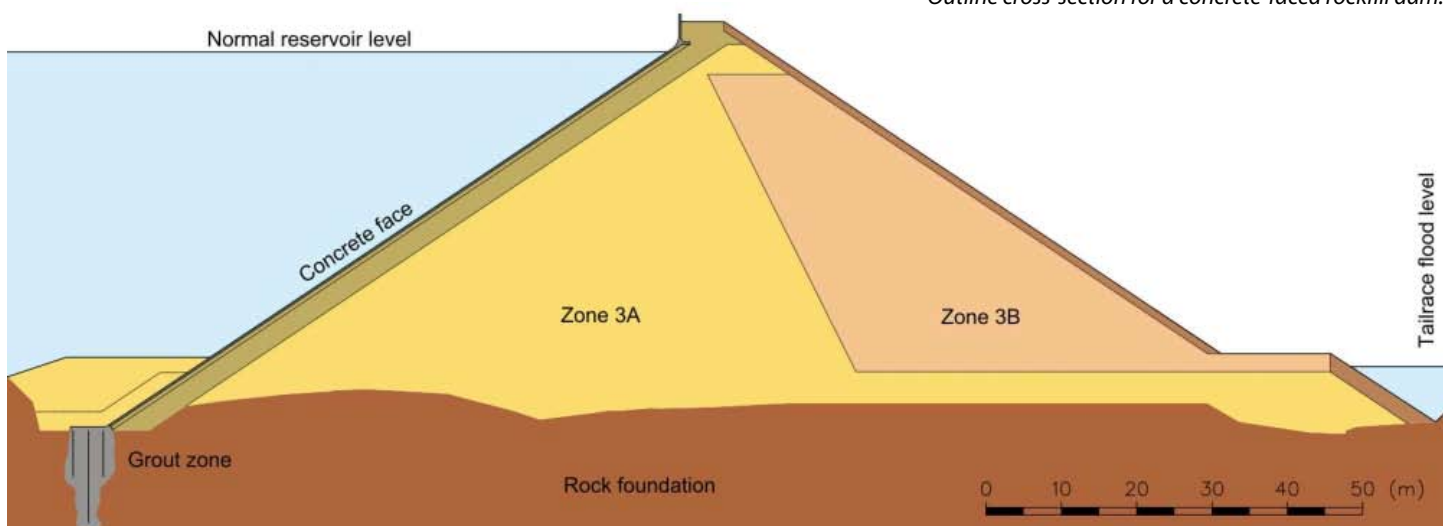
Some of the land within the dam footprint is privately owned, some is conservation estate and some is Crown forestry. WWAC is currently in discussions with all parties over the land tenure.

### ► Paying for the dam

Putting a dollar value on a natural resource such as water is a very complex issue. Irrigators already pay to obtain water permits and will continue to do so, although those costs will most likely change to fund the proposed dam. Urban and industrial users also already pay. Who should pay for the portion of the cost of the dam that will meet environmental needs is yet to be resolved. WWAC is investigating every opportunity to seek central government support for this project and is looking at a range of funding methods as part of its ongoing investigations.



Dam layout details at site.



Outline cross-section for a concrete-faced rockfill dam.

# Other studies

## Environmental flow

WWAC has worked on 30 percent of the water in the dam being allocated to enhancing environmental flows in the river. This calculation for environmental flow is currently being peer reviewed by NIWA. Also under consideration is the cost sharing for provision of water earmarked for environmental enhancement.

## Bat survey

The committee is engaging a contractor, with the assistance of the Department of Conservation, to undertake a survey to determine whether there are any bats normally in the area of the dam footprint. Current information suggests this area is not home to any significant bat population. The survey will provide accurate information on which to base further considerations.

For more information visit:

[www.tasman.govt.nz/index.php?WaterforWaimeaBasin](http://www.tasman.govt.nz/index.php?WaterforWaimeaBasin)



Site investigations – drilling and testing foundation rock on the dam abutment.

## This project is funded by:

- Tasman District Council
- Nelson City Council
- Sustainable Farming Fund
- Waimea Plains water users and landowners
- Fish and Game New Zealand, Nelson Marlborough Region.



## In kind support is received from:

- Iwi
- Department of Conservation

## WWAC Members

Murray King (Chairman, Lower Confined Aquifer)	03 544 8465
Dennis Cassidy (Delta Zone)	03 544 2852
Kit Maling (Waimea East Irrigation Co)	03 544 0536
Stephen Sutton (Waimea West)	03 544 4026
David Easton (Upper Confined Aquifer)	03 526 6854
Julian Raine (Golden Hills/Hope Aquifer)	03 547 5338
Barney Thomas (Nelson iwi)	03 547 4934
Deputy Mayor Tim King (Tasman District Council)	03 542 3849
Peter Thomson (Tasman District Council)	03 543 8440
Neil Deans (Fish and Game)	03 544 6382
Dave Plant (NCC)	03 546 0267
Martin Heine (DOC)	03 546 9335

**WWAC members are available to answer your questions.**

## Lee/Wairoa Liaison Group

Terry Trembath (Lee Valley)	03 542 3387
Allen and Maree Parsons (Wairoa)	03 541 9637
Wayne Neal (Lee Valley)	03 542 4424
Tony Chivers (Wairoa)	03 541 8810
Bill & Joan O'Neill (Lee Valley)	03 542 3707
G & L O'Meara (Lee Valley)	03 542 4004
Chris Weir (Lee Valley)	03 542 3197
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