

RUAPEHU COMMUNITIES URGED TO SAVE WATER

All Ruapehu communities are being urged to conserve water with users on the Raetihi water supply having a total sprinkler ban re-introduced and being restricted to the use of hand held hoses every second day for irrigation and other purposes.

Ruapehu District Council (RDC) Team Leader Environment, Anne-Marie Westcott, said that the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) recorded barely a drop of rain falling in the central North Island during February.

“Ohakune recorded only 2mm of rain which is just 3 percent of its usual February rainfall,” she said.

“Due to the dry conditions we have experienced across Ruapehu over summer, and the lack of any significant rain relief to recharge our river systems, our river levels which are our primary water sources are flowing well below their desired levels.”

“The hot, dry conditions have seen a dramatic increase in water consumption.”

Ms Westcott stated that the biggest concern at this point was Raetihi as the Makotuku River (Raetihi’s water source) is running at extremely low levels.

“Environmental data from the NIWA website measures the Makotuku River average water flow as normally being 0.45 cubic metres per second,” she said.

“However, current NIWA data measures the Makotuku River as flowing at only 0.07 cubic metres per second.”

Ms Westcott said that on the Whanganui River the water flow measured at the Te Maire gauge is sitting around the 30 cubic meters per second and is struggling to rise above this range.

“The minimum low flow at the Te Maire gauge is 29 cubic meters per second at which point taking water for power production ceases,” she said.

“Council urges all Ruapehu residents to be vigilant about their water use and for all communities outside Raetihi where there is a total sprinkler ban not to use sprinklers during the hottest part of the day.”

Ms Westcott commented that by working together to reduce water consumption we should be able to avoid the need to implement more drastic water conservation measures.

“Until there is significant volumes of rain to put flow in the river and recharge the aquifers all Ruapehu residents should restrict their use of water,” she said.

“From the current river flows we need a lot of rain to get the water levels up to where there is no stress on the environment.”

End.