

# The Opuha Dam Story

Managing the Resource

Water Infrastructure Forum 20/12/2008



Opuha Water Partnership December  
2008

## Fish Rescue Opihi early 1980's



*It was soul destroying – there was nothing in the dried-up sections – just gravel. It was a dead river.”*

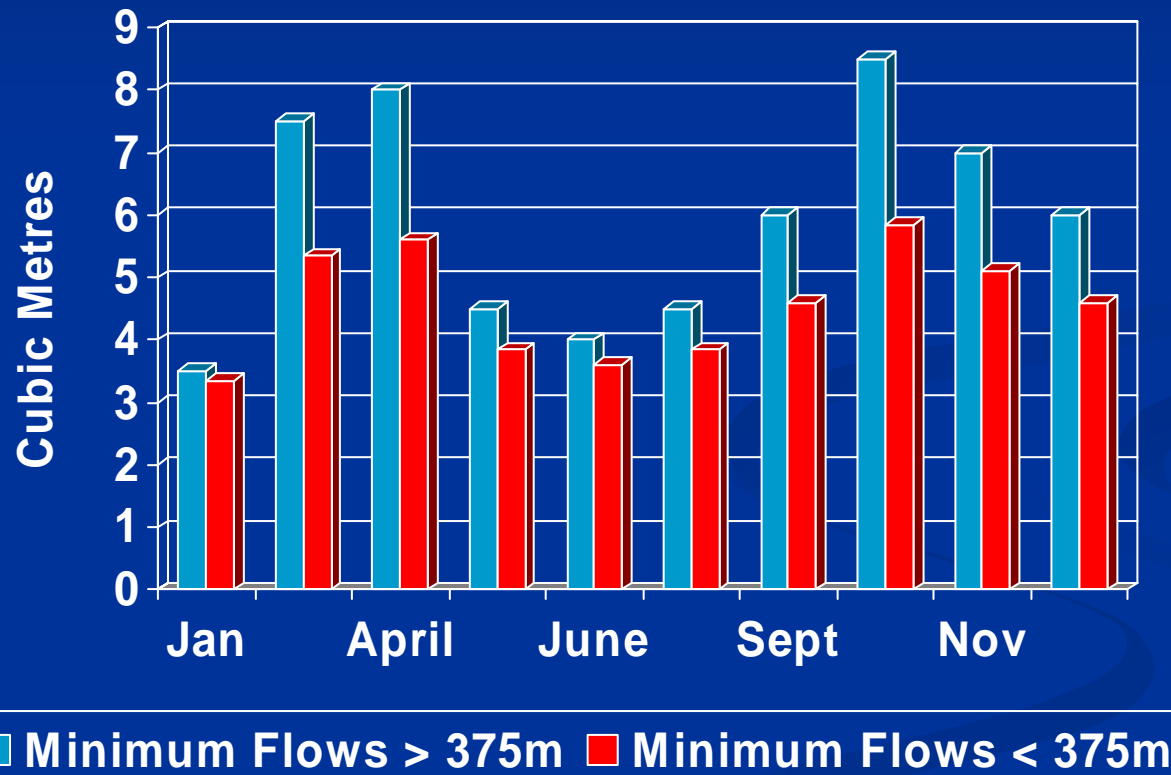
*Mark Webb, Fish & Game officer*

Opihi Water Partnership December  
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# The Negotiation

## Minimum Environmental Flows

Opihi Regional River Plan Oct 2002



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# The Deal for the Water

## Priority of Water Releases 370 – 391.2m

- 1<sup>st</sup> Environmental Flow Opuha & Opihi River
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Domestic Use and Stock Water TDC and MDC
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Irrigation
- 4<sup>th</sup> Electricity Generation

Above 391.2m Generation Discretion by Opuha Water Ltd

# The Rules

## Opihi River Regional Plan – October 2000

*Clearly defined the management for the catchment*

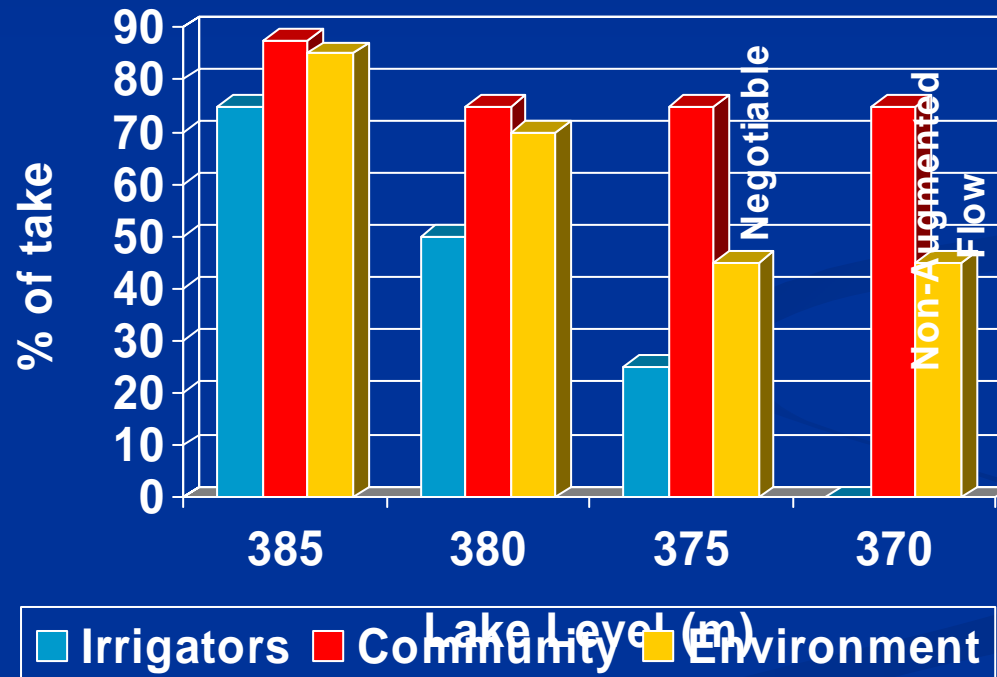
Points to an advisory Group OEFrag

- Local Iwi – Arowhenua
- Fish and Game, DOC
- Timaru and Mackenzie District Councils
- Federated Farmers
- Opuha Water Partnership

Advisors Only – Ecan, Environmental Consultants

# Environmental Flows

## Proposed Changes To Plan



# Environmental Dam Management Issues

- **Low DO Levels** – Sparge System for aeration
- **Low Storage Management** – Environmental and Financial
- **Flood Buffering** – Environmental and Financial
- **Flushing Flows** – Environmental
- **Didymo** – Environmental and Financial

# Opuha Dam

- Annual Generation Revenue Budget \$1.6m
- Irrigation Income 2007 \$2.0m
- Irrigation Charges \$175
- Max generation month \$350K

# Work Still To Do

- Hydrology
- Efficiency in delivery and use.
- Audited Self Management
- Reticulation Hub

# Opuha Lessons

*Good things take time*

- Community support / trust
- Someone needs to hold the Baby
- Project Champions – They need support
- Reliability needs to be High 95% +
- Need to be affordable in normal times?
- Management is ongoing

Opuha Dam Water Management

Supreme Winner

Canterbury Resource Management Awards

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