

Cardrona catchment

Preliminary Feedback on Water Management Options

During a community workshop on Tuesday 11 June 2013 the Otago Regional Council (ORC) presented community members in the Cardrona Valley and wider Wanaka area with a number of options for managing the Cardrona River and the Wanaka Basin-Cardrona Gravel Aquifer. Following this presentation a call was made for feedback on the presented options. The sections below outline the main conclusions drawn from the feedback received.

Minimum Flow Options

ORC presented three minimum flow options for the Cardrona River. These options were:

Option A – Continuous Flow	700l/s @ Clutha Confluence (All year)
Option B – Peak Holiday Season Flow	700l/s @ Clutha Confluence May – Jan 400l/s @ The Larches Feb- Apr
Option C – Extended Low Flow	700l/s @ Clutha Confluence May – Dec 400l/s @ The Larches Jan- Apr

Seventy-one different people or organizations provided feedback on the presented minimum flow options. A summary of the feedback on each minimum flow option is outlined below. (Please note that not every respondent has stated reasons for supporting or disliking a particular option.)

Feedback on Option A – Continuous flow

Seven respondents preferred Option A, stating the benefits for fish spawning, juvenile rearing and adult trout habitat and for passive and active recreation (e.g. angling, walking, bathing in pools) as the main reason for supporting this option.

Fifty-nine respondents stated Option A as their least preferred option. The following reasons were given for disliking this option:

- The positive impact of water usage on farming and local economy (29 resp.) ,
- The insignificance of benefits for native fish or trout (6 resp.)
- No benefit in terms of the river's usage as a recreational resource (1 resp.)
- The presence of other recreational opportunities nearby (5 resp.)
- The healthy state of the river at present (3 resp.)
- Low flows prevent the further spreading of trout (2 resp.)
- Dry river beds can be visually appealing (1)

Feedback on Option B – Peak Holiday Season Flow

One respondent expressed a preference for Option B, due to the positive impact of flow continuity during the peak holiday season on (passive) recreation (e.g. walking, picnicking).

Thirty-one respondents stated Option B as their least preferred option. The following reasons were given for disliking this option:

- The negative impact on farming and the local economy (13 resp.)
- No benefit for river ecology, native fish or trout habitat (9 resp.)
- No benefit in terms of the river's usage as a recreational resource (6 resp.)
- Low flows prevent the further spreading of trout (2 resp.)
- Presence of recreational opportunities elsewhere (2 resp.)
- The positive impact of irrigation on the landscape (1 resp.)
- Irrigation reduces the risk of wild fires (1 resp.)
- No benefit to tourism (1 resp.)

Feedback on Option C – Extended Low Flow

Twenty-eight respondents preferred Option C. The following reasons were given for supporting this option:

- The benefits to farming and the local local economy (16 resp.)
- Lower reaches of the Cardrona River only has limited appeal (3 resp.)
- The presence of other recreational opportunities nearby (1 resp.)
- The positive impact of farming and irrigation on the landscape (1 resp.)
- Low flows prevent the further spreading of trout (1 resp.)

Nineteen respondents stated Option C as their least preferred option. The following reasons were given for disliking this option:

- The negative impact on farming and economy (6 resp.)
- No benefit for river ecology, native fish or trout habitat (8 resp.)
- No benefit in terms of the river's usage as a recreational resource (3 resp.)
- Presence of recreational opportunities elsewhere (2 resp.)
- Hinders the further development of the river as a recreational resource (1 resp.)
- The positive impact of irrigation on the landscape (1 resp.)
- Irrigation reduces the risk of wild fires (1 resp.)
- No recognition of the rivers aesthetic and intrinsic values (1 resp.)
- No recognition that river belongs to wider community (1 resp.)

Alternative options

Thirty-nine respondents suggested alternative options for a minimum flow, including:

- Setting the minimum flow @ 300l/s at the Clutha Confluence (13 resp.)
- Preserving the status quo / no minimum flow restriction (7 resp.)
- Setting a minimum flow regime that is less restrictive than Option C (2 resp.)
- Working out a compromise between Options A and B (1 resp.)
- Providing for a gradual transition from Option C to Option A or B (1 resp.)

Where respondents proposed an alternative option that was less restrictive than any of the options presented by the ORC, they stated the following reasons:

- The benefits for farming and the local economy (12 resp.)
- The healthy state of the river at present (10 resp.)
- Cardrona currently provides sufficient recreational opportunities (1 resp.)
- The Lower Cardrona lacks appeal and there are other recreational opportunities nearby (4 resp.)
- The positive impact of irrigation on the aquifer (2 resp.)
- The positive impact of irrigation on the landscape (1 resp.)

Options for a primary allocation limit

ORC also presented two options for a primary allocation limit for the Cardrona River. These options were:

Option A: 500l/s

Option B: 1,000l/s

Sixty-one people provided feedback on these options.

Feedback on Option A

Four respondents favored Option A. The following reasons were given for supporting this option:

- Adequate protection for the aquifer (1 resp.)
- Good surety of supply for existing consent holders (1 resp.).

Feedback on Option B

Eight respondents preferred Option B for the following reasons:

- Option B has the least impact on farming and economy (8 resp.)
- Need to protect existing values, but not appropriate to enhance the environment (1 resp.)

Alternative options

A large number of respondents (38) suggested alternative options, such as:

- Postpone the decision until more information around water usage is available and all deemed permits have been renewed (23 resp.)
- Develop a primary allocation limit that is less restrictive than Option B (2 resp.)
- Develop a primary allocation regime that reflects that area that can be irrigated (1 resp.)
- Develop a primary allocation limit between 1,000l/s and 500l/s (3 resp.)

Other matters

Eight respondents noted that they did not understand the concept of primary allocation limit very well, while three respondents stated that the discussion around a primary allocation limit should be held between those directly affected only, and should not be held with members of the general public.

Options for a Groundwater Management

Two options were presented for managing the Wanaka Basin - Cardrona Gravel Aquifer:

Option 1: Maximum Allocation Volume of 5Mm³/yr

Option 2: Maximum Allocation Volume of 8Mm³/yr and a Restriction Level over eastern portion of aquifer

Twenty-three people provided feedback on the presented options for a Maximum Allocation Volume.

Feedback on Option 1

Twelve people stated a preference for Option 1. The reasons given were:

- Adequate protection for the aquifer (4 resp.)
- Good surety of supply for existing consent holders (3 resp.).

Feedback on Option 2

Nine respondents preferred Option 2, with seven of these respondents stating the greater economic benefits of Option 2 as the main reason for preferring this option.

Alternative options

Four respondents suggested alternative options, such as imposing a restriction level over the entire aquifer or postponing the decision on a maximum allocation volume until more information is available.

Other matters

Two respondents stated that the discussion around a maximum allocation volume should be held between those directly affected only, and not include members of the general public.