

BEFORE THE CANTERBURY REGIONAL COUNCIL

IN THE MATTER OF the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF Resource consent applications (42 applications for
water take and 13 associated land use and discharge
permits)

APPLICANTS LOWER WAITAKI APPLICANTS

EVIDENCE OF WAYNE DOUGLAS GRAFTON

28 August 2008

Duncan Cotterill
Solicitors acting: Camilla Owen/Andrew Thomas
PO Box 827, Nelson 7020

Phone (03) 546 6223
Fax (03) 546 6033

Introduction

1. My full name is Wayne Douglas Grafton. I am a professional fishing guide living in Omarama. I operate the business Flyfish Omarama. I started fishing the Hakataramea River in 1976. During these early years I fished the whole river, however in recent years I have concentrated my fishing in the upper reaches above Cattle Creek.
2. I have fished the Hakataramea River annually since beginning in 1976. I have noticed a slow decline in the water quality and flow in the lower reaches. In my opinion, this has resulted in the river becoming less of a world class trout fishery.
3. In the earlier years, prior to 2000, fishing was good, through its whole length. The lower gorge, just above the Hakataramea township, produced some trophy brown trout. Today, you would be lucky to catch a trout at all.
4. This decline in my opinion is due to the lack of water throughout the year and the fish not becoming resident as water levels drop. As the water level drops the water warms, and the fish drop back into the Waitaki.
5. I understand low flows can be attributed to dry seasons, however, there is always water in the upper reaches. Unfortunately this water does not assimilate into the Waitaki. I am concerned that any further water extraction may kill this river as a trout fishery forever. This would have a major effect on the lower Waitaki, as the Hakataramea is the major spawning stream for both trout and salmon.
6. In 1999 I became a professional fishing guide, initially guiding on the Hakataramea with a high degree of success, recording days of 60 or more fish over two rods.
7. Over the last 8 years, the numbers and quality have been dropping away. Last year our best day netted just 8 fish. Prior to 2004, I would guide on the Hakataramea until mid January. Now I guide until the third week in November.
8. Living in Omarama, I am lucky to have the world of fishing at my feet, but I still prefer to fish the Hakataramea because of its small stream qualities. All my overseas anglers who fish this river, make comment on how special it is, and how the upper reaches hold a special lure for them to return annually. I fear if the flow is reduced further, then this river will be lost, not just to our foreign anglers, but to the many Kiwi recreational anglers alike.

9. With regards to water quality, I have concerns about the pollution generated from cattle grazing in the river beds and surrounds. Should the flow be reduced further, the pollutants will become more concentrated, and in my opinion fish would no longer enter the Hakataramea from the Waitaki.

10. To summarise, should any further consents be granted that reduce the water flow, the Hakataramea river would not sustain a trout population. This would result in a loss of anglers to the region and the resulting effect on the local communities.

Wayne Douglas Grafton

Dated 28 August 2008