



Whitewater NZ

"Our purpose is to preserve New Zealand's whitewater resources and enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely"

Annual Report to Members 2018-19

August 2019

President's Report

The 2018/2019 year has been a year of continuing evolution for Whitewater NZ. Our relationships both internally and externally are widening and whilst we will always have much to do, we should be proud of what has been achieved this year.

The biggest issue this year has been the Kaituna gorges. Threatened with closure of 23 kilometres of the river within a week, we mobilised, met numerous stakeholders, challenged misinformed views and pushed hard to have the decision changed. We also learned a lot about the views of others that also value the river and ate some humble pie over trespass and other issues that resulted from fractured relationships. The harbourmaster's decision was deferred for a month and after much negotiation, it was reduced to a few hundred metres for six months. The local Okere Falls whitewater community are now working on an alternate portage around Pari Tukino (aka Gnarly gorge) on the left of the river in order to provide a viable and safe portage and ensure the gorge can re-open on 1 November.

The most troubling aspect of this process is the over-reach of legislation and bureaucracy. In our view it is not for the Regional Council/Harbourmaster to determine what rivers are "safe" to paddle, in the same way that recreation in the mountains is the responsibility of those that venture into them.. Conversely, as river users we need to show greater respect toward adjacent landowners and to the river itself. To quote from our values document, a work in progress; "The river is a church, a place of spiritual communion, equally dynamic, intimidating, beautiful, tranquil, savage and unforgiving." It sits at the heart of our community as it does for many other communities, and we owe our lives to it - respect.

A brief summary of the year's positives and work-ons follows;

Positives

National park access and DOC Westland relationship. Whilst the national park plan review process has stalled pending a reset from DOC, our lobbying for recognition of whitewater users will help when the process restarts.

Working on the Okere/Kaituna River, building relationships within Okere Falls and with BOPRC councillors and staff has resulted in progress and a way forward. We have learned about the Harbourmaster's powers, questioned why they are limited to harbours in some parts of New Zealand but not others, and built our understanding of tikanga Maori, and understand we have much to about the historical context of the rivers that sit at the heart of everything we love about whitewater.

Unity of team and ethos of the WWNZ board, making it both a productive and rewarding bunch of people to work with.

Picking our battles, recognising that while we remained concerned with water quality issues, water bottling

etc, WWNZ should direct its limited resources and focus on whitewater paddlesports. WWNZ support for the major events around the country - Bullerfest, Citroen, Wairoa extreme and promotion at Tongariro release days.

Needing attention

Digital presence and tools - still an issue with out-dated systems. It has been said before, but we now have a way forward and a focus on addressing this over the coming months

Membership - lifting our membership numbers and making it easier to administer

Weaving tikanga Maori into the organization and the community appropriately.

Safety and risk management - continually improving safety culture and education. We applied for funding for regional river safety training and unfortunately Water Safety NZ rejected our application so it's back to the drawing board to find a way to fund this activity.

As my final year of three as President, I'm happy to be passing over the role in the knowledge that Whitewater NZ's future is positive on many fronts. The board's team work is strong and the mix of people, perspectives, skills and enthusiasm is encouraging, as is the quality of those that have been nominated for the coming term. It has been a privilege to serve our community as well as being a great learning experience and very rewarding meeting so many people around the country.

Finally, gratitude and respect goes out to the members of the current board, Rachael Moore and Justin Venable who are also standing down this year, the regional ambassadors looking after our local runs and sorting out local issues, the people working behind the scenes running events, sharing and caring for the rivers, the club volunteers that train and guide others (you guys really deserve medals!), those who run trips and get people passionate about dancing down the river in the wild, with a boat and paddle.

See you on the river.

Nga mihi,
Nigel Parry.

Membership

Our membership has remained stable during the year - we have approximately 4500 members and supporters (we are unsure of the exact numbers as we do not have accurate numbers of members in the clubs).

We are investigating ways to make membership renewals easier and slicker with options with improved reminders and billing.

Regional Ambassadors

Last year Whitewater NZ established a network of Regional Ambassadors to cover 18 regions around the country. Regional Ambassadors have an important role, even though some have had not had anything substantial to get through, others certainly have and ultimately it makes us stronger when we have a local person to call on that can help to identify and resolve local issues.

We are immensely grateful to the paddlers who volunteered for these roles and their willingness to muck in when asked. A list of ambassadors is included at the end of this document.

Conservation

Mokihinui

The Mokihinui was a major campaign for Whitewater NZ and Forest and Bird, when Meridian was attempting to build an 85 metre dam and kill a wild river, when there are far more environmentally acceptable hydro alternatives down the road. ([Video: A tale of two rivers](#)) This year the government announced that the entire catchment would be added to the Kahurangi National Park, protecting it in perpetuity.

Waitaha River

The Waitaha hydro concession from DOC has still not had a decision delivered. No decision means no change, and the river flows freely for the time being.

Some have reported that the track around the gorge is easier to follow now that the area is receiving more tramping activity, possibly off the back of the publicity surrounding the threat of the hydro scheme.

Ngaruroro Water Conservation Order (WCO) Application

We are expecting a decision from the hearing on the application for the Ngaruroro within the coming weeks. This application has been many years in the making and tremendous amount of work for a number of people. It has been widely and actively supported by many in the whitewater community. The application covers the entire river from source to sea, the lower section below the Whanawhana cableway being the most contentious. Fingers crossed - it would be good to see another win for our rivers.

Releases

Scheduled hydro releases over the last year in the North and South islands went ahead mostly as planned and continue to be well supported across the country. The Tongariro scheme is back to three full releases per year and the closure of the Whakapapa diversion tunnel for maintenance over 12 weeks provided opportunities to paddle the river in its free flowing state.

The Tekapo course goes from strength to strength and we are very pleased with the refreshing approach Genesis brings to support the releases here and in the central North Island.

The Mangahao project to install a more reliable gate on the Mangahao is making very slow progress, having missed the planned timetable of releases restarting in summer 2019. With other fires taking our attention this one has been on our back burner. However we will be focussing on holding King Country Energy and their majority shareholder Trustpower to account and recently formed a steering committee to guide our approach to resolving this issue.

Treasurer's Report

We have maintained a sound position with a net surplus of \$3280 (similar to last year) and total assets of \$56000.

The audited Statement of Financial Performance shows contains \$5500 in income and the same amount in general expenditure which was unrelated to core Whitewater NZ business - it is a grant receipted by us and passed on to the World River Boarding Champs which were held in Queenstown.

There was a small increase in membership revenue compared to the 2017/18 year when the increase was 50% over the 2016/17 year (that result was never a sustainable increase and was mainly the result of improved invoicing).

The accounts have been audited by Zane Colville and his report and the Financial Statements are available to members in conjunction with this annual report.

Regional Ambassadors 2018/2019

Auckland	Kazuto Kora
Bay of Plenty/Okere	Dylan Thomson
Waikato	Terry Lasenby
Taupo/Central North Island	Helen Brosnan
Taranaki	Kev Pay
Hawkes Bay	Warren Hales
Wellington	Michelle Shurmann
Nelson/Marlborough/Golden Bay	Simon Rutherford
Buller	Sophia Mulder

West Coast	Keith Riley
Central Otago	Roy Bailey, Gordy Rayner & Antz Longman
Dunedin	Stef Austin
Southland	Ben Young

WWNZ Board

2018/2019

Nigel Parry - President	Rachael Moore	Phil Clunies-Ross
Dan Kirkman	Sarah-Jane Luoni	Justin Venable
Kevin England	Robin Rutter Baumann	