



Whitewater NZ

Mo ngā awa te aroha, he waiaroha For the love of rivers

Annual Report to Members 2019-2020

President's Report

The 2019-2020 year has been a big one for Whitewater NZ. There have been some big wins, and some strange times.

We launched a new website with a fresh new look and a new logo that represents the journey a river takes from the mountains to the sea. The website comes with a new web address, whitewater.nz, which we believe is a better home for Whitewater New Zealand's "window to the World". The Board's aim was to re-brand the organisation, to better represent the character of Whitewater NZ and the whitewater community of NZ. But, our rebrand is much more than that; it's about connecting with the river people of Aotearoa and making sure that the Board of Whitewater NZ is in touch with what's going on, on the ground, and on the rivers around the country. **We are proud to report a 32% increase in membership numbers from this time last year.**

We think that we've achieved a lot of what we set out to do, but we're also under no illusions that there's still much to do, and being connected to the whitewater community isn't something that you can do and then forget about. Like any relationship, it takes effort and time to develop a strong bond, so we've set some solid foundations to help make Whitewater NZ a bigger part of the river community.

We've replaced some old tools for newer, better ones:

- The old Civi CRM membership management system is gone and we have a reliable new membership management system that actually tells people when their membership is due for renewal and lets us know who is a paid member at any point in time.
- We have a reliable e-mail system that allows people to unsubscribe if they want to (many of our "supporters" in the past were people who didn't want to be on the mailing list, but couldn't get off!!)
- The river guide app (Developed by Phil Clunies-Ross and James Mackay and supported by WWNZ) replaces the old river descriptions and presents real-time flow and weather data, as well as giving people the ability to log their trips and collect valuable user data to support our conservation and access battles. This is still very much a work in progress but will become more and more useful with time (and use). Ongoing work with the River Guide is now focussed on tightening up current river descriptions and writing descriptions for new runs. We will also be doing a push to get more people actively using this resource, i.e. contributing to descriptions and hazard notifications as well as logging trips.
- The web forums have been updated to a more user-friendly system and again, will become more useful with time.
- We've launched an Instagram account and continue to connect with people through Facebook as well, taking WWNZ out into the murky world of Social Media.

With these tools and a renewed focus on connectedness, we believe WWNZ is now firmly positioned to encourage the development of river sports in Aotearoa. And to effectively

protect and restore our special rivers so that we and future generations can enjoy the unique waterways of the Land of the Long White Cloud.

But the biggest feature of the year has to be the (ongoing) Covid-19 pandemic. During the Level 4 lockdown, the Government guidance was unmistakable. Stay home. So, Whitewater NZ tried to help people get through this boredom by offering some social media entertainment; we ran a photo competition and provided rules guidance. During that Level 4 period we also proactively lobbied the Government to respect our sport and the needs of our community, ensuring that whitewater activities were on the “go” list for level 3 (and level 2). This process involved gathering and analysing the high-level guidance and then developing our own sport-specific guidance, which we then proposed to the Government through our relationships with Recreation Aotearoa, Mountain Safety Council and Sport NZ. Clearly the need for physical distancing and risk reduction was paramount, so WWNZ developed a set of sensible guidelines that allowed paddlers to get out and get a moving water fix whilst staying safe and operating within the rules.

Navigating our way through this pandemic response whilst trying to help river people to be able to get out on the water without compromising the “Team of 5 Million” was no easy task. However, with the world’s eyes on Aotearoa, we’re proud to say that some other countries, (who didn’t have such effective Government leadership) adopted WWNZ’s paddling guidelines.

Around the country there have also been some major success stories:

- WAITAHA: After a 5-year long battle, Westpower’s application to put a hydro scheme on the Morgan Gorge was declined! For now, this is a great success story, but we remain diligent and protective of this precious place. Ongoing work is now focussing on providing some lasting protection for the Waitaha Valley, possibly in the form of a land reclassification, making it a Scenic or Recreation Reserve. Additionally, WWNZ is working with FMC to propose a [Westland Wild Rivers park](#).
- KAITUNA: On 1st May 2019 the Bay of Plenty Harbourmaster closed the Lower Gorges, indefinitely. This was an unprecedented move that meant that it was illegal for kayakers to enter the Lower Gorges. WWNZ quickly negotiated a temporary closure for only a short length of the Lower Gorges and began the process of working out the issues that led to the closure. In a monumental effort by WWNZ and local boaters, we re-established legal access to the Lower Gorges and improved the landowner relationships as well as the on and off river safety. On the 6th of December the temporary closure ran out and our right to paddle one of the country’s most spectacular pieces of whitewater was reinstated! The first annual report to the The Lake Rotoiti Scenic Reserve Board detailing the use of the Lower Gorges and the portage trail through the Scenic Reserve was written by Dylan Thomson and delivered early
- NGARURORO: In August the Special Tribunal recommended that the upper Ngaruroro River in Hawkes Bay be protected by a Water Conservation Order, the highest form of protection available for a river in NZ. This was a major success for WWNZ and the other co-applicants (Fish and Game, Forest and Bird, Jet Boating NZ, and Ngati Hori ki Kohupatiki). Ongoing work is now focussed on ensuring that the wording of the resultant WCO is fit for purpose and provides meaningful

protection to this important river. We successfully applied for a (\$10K) grant from the Environmental Legal Assistance Fund to help with the ongoing costs of fighting for what's right and this funding has allowed us to mount a strong legal challenge to the weak wording provided in the original Water Conservation Order. We are awaiting a three-day pre-Environment Court Mediation session (September 2020) at which we hope to come to an equitable agreement with the other appellants (Hawke's Bay Regional Council, The Winegrowers Association, Beef and Lamb, Pernod Ricard and others) who seek to further weaken the WCO. Whitewater NZ also lodged a submission to Hawke's Bay Regional Council in response to the TANK Plan (Plan Change 9), which we believe may allow for adverse effects to the whitewater qualities on the Ngaruroro (we are strongly opposing the plan).

- **HEALTHY WATERWAYS:** The health of our rivers got a big helping hand from a new piece of legislation that takes water quality seriously. WWNZ prepared a strongly supportive submission and pointed out some improvements that could make this legislation even more effective. Ongoing work in this area involves keeping a check on actual improvements and holding the Government accountable where necessary.
- **CANOE SLALOM NZ:** Coach Matt from CSNZ has joined the WWNZ Board and is working to improve relationships between whitewater recreationists and kayak/canoe slalom. This is a positive move that will see the inclusion of recreationists and increase the participation numbers at slalom events, as well as up the skills of whitewater river users.
- **DOC:** We've been building (metaphorical) bridges with DOC to help assure equitable access to the National Parks for whitewater river users. Ongoing work in this area includes establishing a ballot system for preferred landing sites and working with track designers to ensure walking tracks are constructed with carrying a kayak in mind.

Unfortunately, there are some areas that have not been quite so rosy:

- **MANGAHAO:** We continue to apply pressure to King Country Energy to abide by their resource consent conditions and provide recreational releases on the Mangahao River. So far we're not succeeding, but we're working hard to make this happen! Our workhorse Past President, Nigel Parry has been leading the charge with this. He is the chair of a newly formed committee, The Mangahao Steering Group, which was formed to ensure the most effective lobbying and effective management of the river and the slalom site. He's compiled a damning chronology of events, highlighting the many unacceptable breaches of the Consent Conditions and this has been forwarded to the Ombudsman for comment. We await a response.
- **WHAKAPAPA:** In October 2019 the normal access to the Whakapapa River via Intake Road was closed. The new owners of the land (Tuwharetoa) are not respecting the legal easement that DoC holds for the purpose of public access along this road and have locked the gate, allowing access to the river only on scheduled release days. The local DoC offices have so far not been able to come to any agreements and appear to be unwilling to take any real action to reinstate this access. We have begun the process of elevating this to a national level and are working with Fish and Game as well as the Walking Access Commission and DoC to get this situation resolved.

SAFETY: The current Board is acutely aware that our responsibility to contribute to river safety in NZ is not being fulfilled. To rectify this, we are helping to support the development of the River Guide app, which has a function for any user to add a “Public Notice” to the top of a river description. This is designed to be used for temporary hazards and access issues. We also believe that accurate, up-to-date descriptions will aid in reducing the risks of whitewater paddling. In addition to this we have been working to establish a series of weekend River Safety Training Workshops to be run around the Country, beginning this summer season. We will initially run two pilot workshops and figure out funding options based on the successes of those pilots.

Treasurer's Report

Over the past 12 month reporting period we have sustained a net deficit of \$9,434. Compared to last year, increased spending occurred in areas including rebranding, logo design, website development, internet hosting, legal fees, and travel. Nonetheless with total assets closing at \$51,206 our financial position remains sound.

The audited Statement of Financial Performance shows revenue from membership dropping \$1960 from the previous period. This is not reflective of any reduction in membership but rather due to WWNZ not receiving subs from one large club due an administrative error (which has since been corrected) and also individual membership subs not all being carried across from Paypal prior to the audit. With these corrections retrospectively actioned membership revenue is now on par with previous year.

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.

KE adds: In addition to the funds held in the WWNZ bank accounts we successfully applied for a \$10,687.60 (+GST) grant from the Environmental Legal Assistance Fund which is held at the Ministry for the Environment and is to be used solely for the purpose of our legal costs in relation to the Ngaruroro Water Conservation Order.

REGIONAL AMBASSADORS: Around the regions our on-the-ground ambassadors have been doing a great job of smoothing over access issues at the Waihopai, Huka Falls, Toaroha and a heap of other “business as usual” work to keep our river access friendly and usable.

MEMBERSHIP:

Overall increase of 32% in reported membership numbers.

These figures are accurate to 11/08/2020, showing a large increase in memberships since the launch of the new website and coinciding with the end of the financial reporting period.

Club memberships: 832, which is broken down below (up from reported 553 last year¹)

Individuals: 106 (up from 78 last year)

Total membership as at 11/08/2020 is 838 (up from 631 last year).

Our “supporters” are people who have opted to be on our mailing but are not paid members.

We have 3103 “supporters” making a total of 3941 members and supporters.

Number of supporters is down by 142 since last year, which is accounted for by a “cleanse” of the email list database. The cleanse removed:

- Duplicate emails
- People who had requested to unsubscribe
- Inactive emails
- Bounced emails
- Deceased people

Clubs:	Members
Auckland University Canoe Club	50
BugSports Club Inc Chch	15
Canoe Slalom Bay of Plenty	5
Down River Kayak Club Inc	40
Hawkes Bay Canoe Club	20
Hutt Valley Canoe Club	28
Kaimai Canoe Club	10
Kupe Canoe Club	119
Nelson Canoe Club Inc	30
New Plymouth Kayak Club (Whitewater Taranaki)	30
Otago Canoe & Kayak Club	54
Porirua Canoe Club	5
Ruahine Whitewater Club	36
University of Canterbury Canoe Club	100
Victoria University Canoe Club	60
Whitewater Canoe Club	230

¹ Reported membership numbers from last year are not reliable due to a poorly maintained membership database. The new figures (2020) are accurate and will provide for an enhanced method for tracking memberships into the future.

We have a growing list of member benefits, which we will be adding to over time and will display on the website shortly.

2019-2020 BOARD:

President - Kev England	Sarah-Jane Luoni - Vice President	Dan Kirkman - Treasurer
Robin Rutter-Baumann	KT Te Maiharoa	Phil Clunies-Ross
Matt McKnight	Phil Claasens	Paddy Brand

Past President Nigel Parry (still playing a big role!).

Stepping down at the AGM:

- Sarah-Jane Luoni
- Robin Rutter-Baumann
- Phil Clunies-Ross

Stepping down at the end of the calendar year:

- Dan Kirkman

Attachments to this annual report:

2019-2020 Financial report (to 31st March 2020)