

Annual Report to members 2003

Robin Rutter-Baumann, NZRCA President

It's been a year of stability and growth for the Association. The AGM in Christchurch saw the election of three new officers, which meant a full executive team for the first time in some years. The meeting also had a good turn out of members from around the South Island so the discussions helped guide us in our work in the 2002-2003 year.

The Executive, as ever, has put in a big effort to ensure that the message of the NZRCA is heard throughout the country and the interests of members are represented as strongly as possible. This work is voluntary and makes an enormous contribution to all NZ paddlers. We've seen membership remain stable this year and we thank our members for their support for the goals of the Association.

One person who stands out for me as having made a major contribution is Milli Lovell, our Administration Officer. Milli has been a driving force behind the scenes, keeping us all on track and acting as the first point of contact for the Association. She has indicated that she intends to step down from this role and will be sorely missed.

Conservation and Access:

This year we worked on issues ranging from re-consenting of power schemes that are decades old to fighting schemes that have only just hit the drawing boards, on rivers from Hamilton to Dunedin. Also a feature of our work this year has been the fending-off of challenges to important protection instruments such as the Buller Water Conservation Order, and supporting the protection of other outstanding rivers such as the Rangitata and Clarence

Late in 2002 we made a significant multimedia presentation to the panel considering submissions on Mighty River Power's hydro scheme on the Waikato River. A feature of this

presentation was footage of the Rainbow Reach section of this river which if it were around today would see the Waikato as a Grand Canyon-style paddling destination. Whilst the NZRCA accepts that it is not possible to restore the rapids lost by the damming of the river we are determined to ensure that current features do not suffer further damage, and that appropriate mitigation is undertaken. We presented a similar case in respect of the Clutha River in early 2003, highlighting the significant loss of iconic rapids such as Sargoods Weir.

Around the same time we also finalised our position with the Tongariro Power Development Scheme. Although we are still awaiting the agreement of other parties we are confident that our negotiations have secured minimum flows and planned releases on the rivers of the central plateau that will be of huge benefit in years to come. However because there are other Appeals to the Environment Court outstanding we are not sure when we will be able to put into action the releases. We will certainly let everyone know when these are to be scheduled. Also in the pipeline is an artificial play feature using one of the hydro canals.

The Waitaki Power Scheme has been a hotbed of debate recently and the NZRCA is continuing to monitor Project Aqua, despite this seeming to present little threat to the already compromised kayaking amenity in Central Otago.

We have been working with Central Otago Whitewater and Otago Canoe and Kayak Club to reach agreement on enhancements to the Clutha River as mitigation for loss of whitewater features. This has been an interesting and challenging project, as amongst the people involved the type of mitigation desired has been a source of tension and debate. The NZRCA believes that within the kayaking community such debate is important as paddlers' interests are diverse and it's important to find a final position that is workable. It is equally important however to present a united front on such issues when in public and I commend all of the people involved for working to achieve this.



The Waikato back when it really was a mighty river

At the other end of the country another area of hot discussion was raised when a woman drowned on the Rangitaiki River (Bay of Plenty). Although



A still from the DVD of the 8mm film of the first descent of Rainbow Reach!

not a kayaking accident the proposal to remove the hazard that caused her entrapment was one that caused much discussion on the NZRCA rivers website Safety Forum and saw us having to formulate our policy on the removal of dangerous features. The crack in the rock that contributed to her death has now been blocked off after a resource consent process was undertaken. The NZRCA decided not to oppose the consent application.

On the Rangitikei (Manawatu) the proposed scheme to close off the lower grade 2 section of the river so that a commercial jet boat could operate appears to have fallen by the wayside. The NZRCA would like to thank all those involved in the Quiet Rangitikei Association who opposed this venture.

In summary it has been a big year for Graeme McIntyre (North Island) and Muzz Baker (South Island) who as our Conservation Officers have worked hard to keep abreast of the vast array of issues. Meanwhile behind the scenes Mike Savory has been beavering away to ensure that planned releases occur and access to rivers is maintained.

Membership

While overall membership numbers remain static there have been several encouraging developments including

the reformation of the Huka Falls Canoe Club (Taupo) championed by Mike Birch and more recently the old Rotorua Canoe Club is being resurrected. The river safety subsidy remains a useful incentive for membership. We now have support from several schools including St Hildas Collegiate, St Patricks College (Kilbirnie), Motueka High and Wakatipu High.

The overall membership numbers do not show the effect of some of these new members because several of our existing Clubs have reduced their membership.

Our membership remains firmly based on a dozen or so major active Canoe Clubs each of which has a significant whitewater component. These clubs include Northland CC, Different Strokes (Auckland), Kaimai CC, Hawkes Bay CC, Huka Falls CC, Ruahine WWC, Kupe CC, Hutt Valley CC, Nelson CC, Whitewater CC, UCCC, Waimanui and OCKC. A number of smaller Clubs also have rejoined NZRCA over the past year and they have potential to grow in membership status. These include Central Otago Whitewater, River City CC (Wanganui), Hamilton CC, Manukau Canoe & Adventure Club, Southland CC and South Taranaki C&KC and Westland CC.

There are still a number of active clubs

who do not support NZRCA. The areas we lack support from include Gisborne, New Plymouth, Wairarapa, Horowhenua, Palmerston North, Marlborough and Aorangi. The challenge for NZRCA is to convince more of these non-affiliated Clubs to join us before they need our support and that of other NZ kayakers. This year's droughts and power crises have brought back many long forgotten ideas for power schemes and we will need to be helping each other to retain our whitewater resources over the coming years.

Safety and Education

Glenn Murdoch returned from Japan to find himself picking up the long running issue of NZRCA's relationship with the Maritime Safety Authority. Along with representatives from NZOIA, Glenn travelled to Wellington to make a presentation to MSA outlining our concerns over the shortcomings of recent investigations. NZRCA has now drafted an agreement between NZRCA, NZOIA and MSA, which outlines the procedures to be followed in future. This should ensure that recommendations from MSA are much more useful to kayakers.

In addition to lobbying the MSA, the NZRCA has also worked with them to investigate two drownings, one on the Waikaia and one on the Kawarau. Both these investigations were greatly assisted by our expert input. In the case of the Kawarau drowning there have been changes to signage on river channels to improve safety for all river users.

As indicated in last year's Annual Report, changes to Lottery Grants Funding in 2002 meant we did not receive our usual financial assistance for River Rescue and Safety Courses this last year. Our relationship with Water Safety NZ continues to be strong and despite the lack of funding we have still managed to provide course subsidies to all members who have applied for it. WSNZ has been positive about the prospect of making

funds available to continue this subsidy for the coming season but as at the time of writing this has not been confirmed.

Communications

One of the aims of the NZRCA is to foster the development of the kayaking community and promote participation in all aspects of kayaking. In this regard the communication to members and between members is vital. Traditionally we have used a newsletter to spread news of what has been achieved and more recently have been using web-based methods, both of these have been developed further this year.

Discussion Forums on www.rivers.org.nz were made available for the first time this year. This expansion of the "Buy, Sell & Swap" forum format has enabled paddlers to easily communicate amongst each other on a wide range of topics. Postings have alerted people to new river hazards, conservation and access related issues as well as generating a lot of general discussion on other topics. The NZRCA is currently attempting to use a web-based system to redevelop its strategic plan and welcomes contributions from all members, to find out more go to openstrategies.com or email webmaster@rivers.org.nz.

Webmaster, Jonathan Hunt, leaves NZ shortly so has also been doing a lot general tidying up work on the site to ensure it remains stable and workable in his absence. Jon's plan at present is to attempt to maintain the site from overseas in conjunction with Mike Birch. However, if there are any web gurus who want to lend a hand I'm sure either Jon or Mike will be pleased to hear from you.

Polly Miller handed over most of the *NZ Canoeing* editing work to Tony Ward-Holmes and his first issue had the usual difficult gestation but was well received. Thank you to the advertisers, whose support is invaluable in ensuring the newsletter is not a drain on our finances. The NZRCA can see a time when *NZ Canoeing* may be circulated electronically. For now the print medium will remain as it ensures easy (although slow) communication of our work as well as being a tangible recognition of a membership.

Finances

Lynne Fuggle has significantly tidied up our financial processes this year and with the use of Mind Your Own Business software has really had her finger on the pulse of things.

We finished the year in a sound financial position although our income has been much less due to difficulties obtaining funding from Water safety NZ and SPARC (was Hillary Commission) via the NZ Canoeing Federation.

This positive financial result has been made possible due to:

- Your membership (thank you)
- Donations from members (over and above their membership fees)
- Recovery of costs for the Buller Water Conservation Order
- Increased sales of Whanganui River Guide and NZ Whitewater
- Sponsorship from advertisers in *NZ Canoeing*
- The generosity of the members of the Executive who continue to absorb costs personally rather than bill these to the NZRCA.

Membership fees are our key source of funds but with member numbers remaining static, fundraising will need to occur if we are to grow our service to paddlers and ensure we are in a secure position to protect rivers in the future. If you are able to assist with fundraising please contact us on (025) 21 21 621.

We are also looking to appoint a new Treasurer as Lynne now has other projects to put her energy into so is standing down at this AGM. Thank you Lynne of all your hard work on what is often a thankless task.

Thank you's

I am grateful for the support and dedication of the whole of the NZRCA Executive team - their commitment to NZ kayakers is outstanding.

Being part of the paddling community has innate rewards. River people are a diverse and yet unified bunch. Within the paddling community members of the NZRCA show, perhaps, more community spirit than other paddlers. Thank you for your membership and your participation, working for you is as special as being on a river with you.

As well as to the various people mentioned elsewhere I'd also like to note my thanks to Hugh Canard (our patron) and to Mike Birch. Hugh has continued to be a great figurehead for the NZRCA; it is great to have his unconditional support for our work as well as his wisdom to draw on. Mike was elected Vice-President last year, he has been a wonderful person to work alongside and his work dealing with the NZ Canoeing Federation has been invaluable.

Robin Rutter-Baumann
President

Financial Report

Lynne Fuggle, NZRCA Treasurer

New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association (Inc) Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2003

Year ended 31st March 2002	Year ended 31st March 2003	
Assets:		
Current Assets		
ANZ Cheque Account	\$13,603	\$10,257
BNZ Finance Account	\$14,886	\$14,618
Accounts Receivable	\$593	\$5,956
	\$29,082	\$30,831
Fixed Assets		
	\$184	\$329
Total Assets	\$29,266	\$31,160
Liabilities:		
Current Liabilities		
GST Account	\$0	-\$112
WSNZ funds	\$3,003	\$3,643
Grants Received in Advance	\$2,658	\$7,049
Accounts Payable	\$0	\$269
Total Liabilities	\$5,661	\$10,849
Net Assets:	\$23,605	\$20,311
Retained Earnings:		
Opening Balance 1 April	\$20,311	\$18,150
Plus Surplus/(Deficit)	\$3,294	\$2,161
Closing Balance 31 March	\$23,605	\$20,311

Some of the highlights of this financial year have been:

- We de-registered for GST as we were no longer benefiting from registration.
- We applied to the IRD for charitable status, but our application was turned down on the grounds that the aims of the Association as defined in our constitution show that our prime purpose is the promotion of the sport of kayaking, and we therefore did not fall into any of the acceptable categories.
- At the time of writing this report, we are in the process of consolidating all our banking accounts at one bank, and to structure our accounts so that they work better for us. This process should have been completed by the AGM.

Lynne Fuggle
Treasurer

Our financial position has remained stable this year and once again we have made a small profit. Fortunately substantial increases in the donations received during this financial year and in the revenue from sales of the Whanganui River Guide made up for the absence of funding from SPARC (formerly Hillary Commission) so that our total income exceeded that from last year. Once again we had no major conservation projects to fund this year, so our overall expenses were on a par with last year's expenses. However, it is in our interest to slowly build up our financial reserves, so that the money will be available should we be required to fund any major conservation or access projects in the future.