



New Zealand Canoeing

99.3

Changes to NZ Canoeing

Polly Miller, Newsletter Editor, communications@rivers.org.nz

Welcome to the 1999 Summer edition of *NZ Canoeing*. Putting together this issue has been a real challenge – there is so much going on in the paddling world this summer! Many thanks for the awesome material that contributors have sent. If you're not in print then you may find that you are famous on the the nzrca website: www.rivers.org.nz - or that your words of wisdom will appear in the next edition.

There have been some changes made to the way *NZ Canoeing* is produced. Members can now

expect three issues per year: Spring, Summer and Autumn, with an Annual Report. These changes were made to reflect the New Zealand paddling season and to reduce costs. *NZ Canoeing* would like to thank our advertisers; these people are valuable members of the paddling community, and their support makes it possible for us to put more our resources into conserving rivers. If you have any comments, please feel free to contact me,

happy paddling
Polly Miller

White Water Rodeo Worlds

Jo Lucas, New Zealand Freestyle Kayak Committee. nzfkcc@clear.net.nz

From the 1st - 5th of December over 350 kayaking athletes visited the site of Fulljames (Ngawaawapura) Rapid in Taupo to compete at the World Freestyle Kayaking Championships.

Competitors and hundreds of spectators and team support people made this competition the biggest freestyle kayaking event ever held in the Southern Hemisphere. The competitors in the World Freestyle Kayaking Championships came from all over the world: Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Fiji, Finland, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the U.S.A.

There were four classes of competition, K1 (competitors sit in a closed kayak and use a double bladed paddle), C1 (competitors must be kneeling and use a single bladed paddle), Open Canoe (Classic style of canoeing without a spray skirt, where the competitor must be kneeling and use a single blade), and Squirt (low volume boat where extreme moves can be made in small water features. *Continued on Page 7.*

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About NZ Canoeing

New Zealand Canoeing is the official newsletter of the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association (NZRCA) Inc. *NZ Canoeing* is published three times per year and distributed free to club and individual members of the NZRCA throughout New Zealand/Aotearoa.

The views expressed in *NZ Canoeing* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Executive of the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association.

NZ Canoeing welcomes advertising from organisations associated with recreational canoeing. Please contact us for our advertising rates, and find out how to show your products and services to kayakers around NZ.

Thanks to Sarah McRae, David Mangnall, Jo Lucas, Graham Charles, John Snook, Robin Rutter-Baumann, Mick Hopkinson, Maree Baker, Janette Kear and the myriad of email correspondents for their contributions to this issue of *NZ Canoeing*. May the rivers flow for you!

Contributions of articles, trip reports, classified advertisements, and letters for publication are gratefully received.

Please send items to:

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The deadline material for the Autumn issue is February 15 2000.

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These prices apply to "print ready" copy only - additional charges may apply for developing text, art work etc.

Please contact Robin Rutter-Baumann, Vice-President of the NZRCA
Ph: 03 3559189 - Fax: 03 355-9123 - Email: advertising@rivers.org.nz

Treaty Issues

Sarah McRae, President

Ownership and continued freedom of access to our lakes and rivers are growing issues, particularly as a result of claims made under the Treaty of Waitangi (see NZ Canoeing 99.1). I recently wrote, on behalf of the NZRCA, to the Minister Responsible for Treaty Negotiations (the Rt Hon Sir Douglas Graham), to inform him of kayakers' very strong interest in the present debate and the Association's expectation that it will be consulted where freedom of access to New Zealand's lakes and rivers may be affected by the Crown's negotiations.

My letter pointed to the Association's sincere dedication to two important principles: (1) the need to sustain New Zealand's rivers; and (2) the need to retain the ability of present and future generations of paddlers to continue to use our rivers freely. At the same time, the Association appreciates and respects the rights and associations of other groups, including other river users, to New Zealand's water and waterways. Wherever possible, we have encouraged a co-operative relationship with other river user groups, as our rivers are a shared and precious treasure. River protection and freedom of access must be absolutely guaranteed.

In reply, the Minister stated that he was now aware of our concerns, and '[the] Government has determined that redress involving these resources should have minimal impact on public and commercial access, rights and uses', but that "Treaty negotiations are bilateral processes conducted between the Crown and claimants. Because of this the Crown does not consult with third parties over the settlement of particular negotiations before agreements in principle are concluded [although] the Crown does endeavour to represent and protect the interest of all New Zealanders..".

Interesting! From here, your National Executive has committed to maintain the communication between the next Minister Responsible for Treaty Negotiations (Sir Douglas is retiring at this election). Our focus will be to bring kayakers desire for continued freedom of access to their attention. Full copies of the correspondence are available on the website.

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Buller Work-Day at New Year

This event follows hot on the heels of last summer's successful work day on the middle-Matakitaki take-out road.

Organiser

NZ Kayak School & NZRCA

This year's mission

To pull out offending hazardous rubbish (wire, fridges, sheet iron etc) from a local river and arrange alternative disposal, in co-operation with local landowners.

Date

Flow & weather dependent, so will be announced. Expected to be between 29th December 1999 and 2 January 2000. Look for advertising at the Riverview Campground and NZ Kayak School (Murchison). All details will also be posted on the NZRCA website.

Bring

Yourself and if possible some suitable work-gear (overalls, work gloves, boots, wire clippers, spades, ropes that can get dirty).

More information :

See the website.
For details contact Sarah McRae (025) 249 6116 and/or Mick Hopkinson (03) 523 9611.



Paul surfs at O'Sullivan's Rapid on the Buller. Photo Robin Rutter-Baumann

Dam proposed on the Rangitata

Canterbury farmers are seeking to dam the Rangitata for an irrigation source that is reliable during drought. The Rangitata River, an important river for South Canterbury kayakers, anglers and commercial rafters, has a challenging high volume grade 4+ gorge run and a playful grade 2+ section below the gorge.

Consultants investigating the options for hydro development (to reduce the costs of the dam) estimated that a large dam on the Rangitata would cost \$278 million, a smaller option \$178 million. The large dam would have a storage lake just above the gorge and would irrigate 95 000 hectares.

Environmental effects of the dam and lake proposal include the reservoir required occupying the principal salmon spawning grounds for the catchment, and fundamentally changing the whitewater characteristics of the river. For more information contact Ian Logie, safety@rivers.org.nz.

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Mangahao Madness

Colin Leitch, Access Officer. access@rivers.org.nz

Crisis struck this years spring release on the Mangahao River. Heavy rains caused the dam to spill on the day before the release scheduled for Saturday 30 October. The generating company operating the Mangahao site are allowed to call off a release due to adverse hydraulic conditions (drought or flood). Cancelled releases mean that an extra flow date is provided the following year.

The power company feared that a spill was likely during the release. Deciding that this would present an unacceptable risk to kayakers they gave notice on Friday that Saturday's release would not proceed as scheduled. Their point of contact is the Palmerston North Canoe Club. The word went out on the grapevine from there and hit Wellington that evening.

The put-in for the Mangahao is a long way from anywhere and the shuttle is a 90 km drive. In today's climate of rodeo boating a Mangahao trip is no mean feat of organisation. It means leaving town early, driving miles on back roads with sketchy directions, waiting hours in a paddock and getting back late. Any paddlers that actually turned up at the river have just cause for insane rage and consideration of extreme measures like converting to gas and solar to get back at the power companies.

The Mangahao power scheme is one of the oldest operating in the North Island. Water is taken from the Mangahao River and discharged through the powerhouse into the Mangaore Stream on the other side of the hill. During generation the sum of the natural Mangaore flow and the tail-race flow is not to exceed 70 cumecs. During a flood when the dam inflow exceeds the allowable generating capacity the reservoir level rises until water fills a counterweight which opens a totally automatic and otherwise uncontrolled trip gate. This

large wooden structure takes up a significant proportion of the dam face and literally releases a wall of water down the natural river bed, a manmade flash flood potentially up to 300 cumecs. Our recreational flows of 30 cumecs come via another structure, the by-pass tunnel. I've never seen the gate trip but I have heard stories of a couple of runs made when this was happening. Prior to the current resource consent being negotiated the only way to paddle the Mangahao was while the dam was spilling. General consensus is that this is quite dangerous. Small groups of half a dozen or so who are fully aware of the conditions have so far been able to get away with running spill flows without tragedy. However a spill while the regular Mangahao crowd of a hundred

plus paddlers are on the river would be an invitation to an Interlaaken style disaster.

It gripes me that I flew down to Wellington with my boat and ended up paddling the Hutt with my friends who came across the Strait for something special. However, had we all

turned up and had there been water, even with the certain knowledge of a spill, how many would have forgone the trip? It is difficult to imagine every paddler in the regular crowd making an informed and accurate judgement of their abilities and the conditions in the event of encountering spill flows. The dam did trip on Saturday at about 6.00PM, this would have presented little actual risk to paddlers.

The cancelled Mangahao release highlighted problems in the way that the power company informed kayakers of the flow. Discussions are underway between the NZRCA, the Palmerston North Canoe Club and the power company on how releases dates and decided and publicised, watch the website www.rivers.org.nz for details. See you in autumn and twice next spring.

*Spill flows
cause a "flash
flood" of up to
300 cumecs
down the river.*

Tekapo Slalom and Rodeo Site Update

Ian Russell abb.service@nz.abb.com

Last year some initial flows were released down the newly constructed Tekapo Slalom & Rodeo site. At well less than the maximum flow it was clear that there was significant erosion on the sides of the riverbank, and that the design and construction were inadequate.

A great deal of thought and effort has been expended working out how to improve the design and make the course viable. The Tekapo Whitewater Trust have reached a settlement with the original designers which involves a transfer of an undisclosed sum of money back to the Trust. The original designers will no longer be associated with the project.

The revised design is likely to feature an intake gate structure to protect the course from high flows and strengthened protection along the riverbanks. The intake channel may include a 'ski-jump' to slow the water, and which should also produce extra height for a better rodeo feature at the top of the course. A new upper flow limit of 40 cumecs is likely.

No time frame for further construction has been established. The delays have been frustrating for all concerned, but Tekapo Whitewater Trust representative Ian Russell remains positive that a high quality whitewater resource will be available in due course. Currently the course is protected by a temporary dam that will eventually be removed.



It is nearly that time again.... Chaos on the Coast to Coast. Photo: Robin Rutter-Baumann

New Zealand Whitewater

2nd edition

Graham Charles

I never thought it would be this soon but *NZ Whitewater* is pretty much sold out. Thank you very much to all who bought copies and I hope you have enjoyed it and will enjoy the next one.

The book has had a big overhaul. There are 21 showcased runs added, but more in actuality as I tacked some onto the end of others. The existing runs are all still there but many have been updated or completely overhauled to reflect the 'now' nature of NZ kayaking. I have all new cartoons by Bruce Dowrick of Mountoons and wonderful new maps by Anna Williams. The colour photo section has been completely overhauled and features some superb colour images from around the country. All the black and white pix have been changed with a new series called the Kayaking Nightmares also included. The cover has been changed with a well known and popular shot used for this.

The Golden Bay area has seen a large number of additions with the activity over there. Pottons are looking for an early December release to coincide with the Rodeo World Champs and the start of the summer paddling season. The book price will remain the same and the NZRCA are negotiating a discount for NZRCA members.

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Tamur Magic

The Tamur River lies in the east of Nepal. Sarah McRae and Bill Thomson tell of their descent last October.

Nestled in the remote eastern corner of Nepal, the Tamur River is rated as another of Nepal's "one of the best in the World" whitewater trips, combining a wonderful ridge-top 4 day trek with 120 km of technical big water class 4 paddling. And what better than to add a raft-supported trip to the end of our Himalayan honeymoon? Well, that was before we knew about the leeches.

The 20-hour bus journey from Kathmandu to the small hillside town of Basantapur is of course pure delight, especially for the tall Bill who is comatosed with fever for most of the journey. At Basantapur, team leader Marcus Morse herds us from our wheeled prison. Newly liberated, the diverse assemblage of international paddlers settles into trekking mode as easily as hungry sheep in a fresh paddock. We camp near villages where our load-bearing porters can get an evening meal and some well-earned rest.

After two days of 3000m ridge traipsing through rhododendron forest we start our knee-banging descent, plummeting forever riverward for a day and a half. We pass through an idyllic landscape of rice paddies, bush remnants, and thatched Nepali cottages on our way. Farmers greet us as lost friends. One drawback of this part of the journey is the abundance and tenacity of the leeches. These slimy things insist on hitching rides on any available piece of human skin. 'Leech patrol' becomes an intimate evening ritual between good friends.

So to the river. Well almost, as one of our party, mesmerised by the tantric power of the Tamur Valley scenery, seriously twists his ankle. After a 3-hour mercy dash by the still smiling Marcus to the nearest phone, Dave the flying Scot leaves by helicopter, with a suspected fracture. "Bad luck old chap and more rum for us", we ponder, as he propels skyward. The river itself is pure heaven. Late October's post-monsoon flow is ideal. The first two days provide a continual supply of technical big water with the world's best surfing. A simultaneous flip and wrap by the paddle and gear rafts respectively are minor distractions. Bill re-states his passion for paddling straight into huge holes.

Day three and the water eases off, becoming surprisingly calm. Our one criticism of the 'Whitewater Nepal' guidebook, which we carefully and conscientiously consider before concluding, in our humble opinion, is that it understates the amount of flatwater in the middle section of the river. In a fit of boredom, one drawling Mississippi rodeo paddler fantasises over new moves on a slightly panicked semi-immersed water buffalo (the "Boof-allo" and "Cow-splat" now enter paddling mythology.)

Day four, 30km from the Sun Khosi confluence, and we're back into the rough stuff, bovine antics and most of our beer long gone. Our salty, sea-surfing friends from the Jersey Canoe Club are reminded of the hydrological differences between our freshwater and marine habitats. These are real holes. The all time favourite rapid we name 'True Romance', nice and inviting at the top, with calmly peaking waves, and a full-on horror epic with huge holes to finish on. The team excitedly discusses the day's events at our last camp at the Sun Khosi confluence, over a final clean-up of trip food and rum. A proper tribute to the river, and something to dull our senses before Bill and I re-unite with the Kathmandu-bound 4-wheeled chamber of horror.

Endnote: Our thanks to Marcus and the rest of the Tamur team, from Ultimate Descents, for their luxury river adventure service. Thanks also to Dave Allardice and other UD staff for directing us to the best rivers and answering our questions. Note also that most of the Tamur clients flew back to Kathmandu after taking off the river. This option is highly recommended.



Rafts cautiously find their rhythm on Day One. Photo: Jason Roberts.

World Rodeo Champs

Continued from Page 1...

Some of the people competing in this World Champs were

K1 Men:

Ken Whiting: Team Canada, World Champion 1997

Eric Jackson: Team U.S.A, American Champion, '93 World Champion

Simon Westgarth: Team Ireland, European Champion 1998, Euro Cup Winner '99

Brad Sutton: Team Canada, North America Cup

Olli Grau: Team Germany, 2nd PreWorld '98, German Master '98, World Champion '95

Ali Donald: Team Ireland, 3rd Euro Cup '99

Rusty Sage: Team U.S.A, PreWorld Champion '98 at the age of 17 (Junior but competed in open men)

K1 Women:

Deb Pinager: PreWorld Champion '98, Euro Cup Winner '99

Jutta Kaiser: Team Germany, 2nd in Euro Cup '99

Linda Heroui: Team France, 3rd in Euro Cup '99

Jamie Cooper: Team U.S.A, American Champion

Sanna Laukkanen: Team Finland, European Champion '98

Athletes are seeded in heats for the preliminaries based on their country ranking. The run begins as the paddler crosses the main lateral of the wave and continues until the time limit or the competitor exits the wave. Four 30 second rides; top three scores added together, make the competitors' score. There are six judges, 4 Technical and 2 Variety judges.

Boat Review

Robin Rutter-Baumann, Vice President

What's 2.3 metres long 65 cm wide and teaches old dogs like me new tricks? OK so you don't know and neither did I 'til I demo'd the Riot Showbiz on the Hutt Gorge. Eddyline Cartwheels became possible and McTwists became easy after the initial quirks of this very short boat became familiar. In holes the 'Biz just asked to be worked hard, its 240 litre volume keeping it high up on the pile despite my 85 kg weight and the Hydro-Glide hull made spinning a breeze.

The seat in this demo Showbiz had been moved 2 inches forwards and downwards which helped initiate the bow and added to stability. A version of the 'Biz is available with the Riot Device Seat which allows movement of the seat up to 3 inches up, down, forward and back this allows for fine tuning beyond most of our wildest dreams.

In the Hutt Gorge at low flow (a grade 3 run) the short length made for a lot of fun the only drawback being the lack of speed which meant the flat section at the end was a grind. As a river runner this boat would be magic for the aggressive intermediate paddler on a narrow river requiring "point and shoot" paddling. On larger or flooded rivers with big eddy fences it would be a handful. As for old dogs like me - I smiled a lot paddling the Showbiz and it certainly made what I'd been trying in other boats happen with a whole lot less effort.

To demo a Riot kayak contact Style Imports (see advert in this issue).

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Wednesday on the Whitcombe

By David Mangnall

Unzipping my tent after waking from a restless sleep, I am greeted by a perfect West Coast day. Yes, Dando would be flying today and so would we. The blue, cloudless sky was proof that another large high had parked itself over the South Island.

One thing I really like about my job at Outward Bound School is my days off. Don't get me wrong, I love my job. It's just that sitting munching my muesli overlooking beautiful Lake Mahinapua while up and down the country commuters are doing their thing, somehow makes up for all the long hours and weekends I work..

Dave and Johnny, my paddling buddies for the trip, were awake. Not much was said we all knew what had to be done. Gear check, heli-net, buoyancy vest, paddle jacket, booties, first aid kit, spare thermals, split paddle, rescue gear, lunch, camera.... Not wanting to think about the consequences of leaving anything behind. I re-check everything.

With time to spare I wander around the camp site in a semi-hypnotic state. The West Coast is now an established destination for overseas paddlers and an onlooker could have confused the scene for an United Nations convention, with Americans, Norwegians and Brits out numbering the Kiwis.

I'm not really sure when the idea of the Whitcombe trip was first mentioned, but it was a river I'd always talked about in hushed tones and put on my "one day"

list. The dry West Coast summer didn't leave us too many options and the economics of helicopter flying made the Whitcombe our best bet. Driving out of Hokitika to our pick-up point, I remember Graham Charles's hot tip "never turn down a trip on the Whitcombe" in his guide book: *New Zealand White Water: 100 Great Kayaking Runs*. Thanks Graham, I won't.

Helicopters are great! For kayakers they've revolutionised our sport and opened the door to whitewater adventure. It's hard believe how easy it is. Standing in a farmer's paddock counting out a roll of 20's to our pilot, Hokitika based Bruce Dando, 15 minutes later I was in the middle of the West Coast wilderness on the banks of a pristine river.

This river is cold! My first impression as I cut out the eddy slicing my paddle through the water and pivot downstream. I was feeling strong and my technique refined. A few days on the Buller under the critical eye of Mick Hopkinson had seen to that. Damn video camera, it never lies.

I keep looking for something wrong. My kayak feels strange. Yes, I had some extra gear but it wasn't that heavy. White water kayaking is a sport played out in the expanse of your mind and I was battling to control mine. *Forget about what's downstream and concentrate on each move.* The first few kilometres of grade III boulder gardens soon have me relaxed and I feel at one with the river and my kayak. Stopping for a snack and a few photos, Dave, Johnny and I enjoy the sun's warmth and the breathless day. Last week seems a million miles away, next week even further. This was therapy for my soul. This was fun.

Further downstream we reach the first grade IV drop. Three clean lines and we're all through. A swing-bridge marks the start of Colliers Gorge and the river's gradient increases to 31 metres per kilometre.

Continued on Page 9



Dave Cassidy Aims for an eddy. Photo, David Mangnall



David Mangnall gets wet on the Whitcombe. Photo: David Cassidy

It wasn't just the gradient that was increasing as I stand on a rock and watch the river drop away in front of me. Colliers Gorge fails superlatives as the river plunges through granite rock for 3 kilometres of grade IV - V whitewater.

Safely into the eddy below the bridge, I pull my kayak up to a vantage point and scout the next drop. I can see a line, the only problem is there is no water there! Dave and Johnny agree, so we portage around a large boulder before seal launching into the river again.

A rapid called "Staircase" is next. Kayaking this grade of water is all about visualising yourself paddling a clean line, linking all the moves together and going for it. *Seal launch off the rock, carve turn into the current, sweep left, angle right. Boof off the rock into the small pool below, plant duffek, breath, relax, ferry glide across, sweep, brace onto pillar wave, straighten, through standing waves and into the bottom eddy. Done!*

I convince myself that was the crux. It isn't. The rest of Colliers

Gorge passes as an intoxicating cocktail of linked moves, adrenaline, tension and relief. This is kayaking at it's best. This is living.

Suddenly the gorge opens out, the Whitcombe becomes the Hokitika and we're floating down to the lower gorge. Stunning blue pools and sculptured rock walls make this lower section of river a "must do" in its own right. Tired muscles push on down stream to the take out. It feels good to be here after over 6 hours on the river. Smiles all round.

Later that night, after one of Dave's superb camp oven pizzas, I drift to sleep. Dreaming of my Wednesday on the Whitcombe. Where would I be next Wednesday? The Whataroa? The Wanganui? Reality stirs inside me. Work!

Been on an awesome trip lately?

Got some great photos?

Write it up and send it in!

Deadline for Autumn issue

15 February 2000

Conservation Update - Resource Management Amendment Bill Submission

Maree Baker, Conservation Officer

Recently Sarah McRae and I presented the NZRCA's submission on the RMA Amendment Bill, which followed closely behind our submission on the proposed amendments.

The bill is now being considered by a parliamentary select committee, as is our second submission. Unfortunately some of the negative aspects of the proposed amendments were not altered in the face of our vehement opposition in the first round.

The following is a summary of the theme of our second submission. Should you wish to read it in its entirety (and are a glutton for punishment!) you can find it on our web page, or can contact me. We:

Supported the maintenance of a definition of "environment" that encompassed recreational values

Opposed the "farming out" of decision making affecting the environment to private companies who are likely to have less relevant information and more vested interests that Regional and District Councils

Opposed any amendments that will lead to increased formality and 'legalese' (heaven forbid!) in the first stages of decision making. The NZRCA and our members are volunteers and should not be discouraged from participating by having to go to the expense of meeting this unnecessary standard

Emphasised that many developers do not bother to find out how their projects may affect recreational kayakers, and opposed any suggestion that would enable developers to get away with this to an even greater extent

Opposed the amendment that weakens the power of National Water Conservation Orders

New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association Inc.

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

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