



New Zealand Canoeing 03.3

Roll on summer!

It's been a very busy time for the NZRCA Exec, check out Conservation & Access to see what I mean. But summer is here and we're all getting out there as much as possible, hope everyone else is too.

With a few people heading off overseas or with a bit much on, the Exec is looking a little thin at the moment. We have vacancies in the position of Administrator, Education officer, and Communications officer, so if you're able to help (and want a free trip to the autumn Mangahao release) give Robin a bell on 03 353-8472.

Admin is a key position in NZRCA as we rely on effective and prompt communication. The Admin Officers is responsible for fielding enquiries (via post and email), forwarding these to the relevant Exec member, taking minutes of exec meetings, receipting memberships, distributing the Whanganui river guide and providing exec members with a kick in the pants when required. This position is currently vacant and requires a person who can contribute about 4-6 hours per week. In recognition of the high level of commitment required to do this job the NZRCA reimburses all costs for this position at a minimum rate of \$3000 per annum (paid 6 monthly).

The Education officer assists the Safety officer, their main responsibility is managing the syllabus of the river safety and rescue courses, liaising with NZOIA and managing the course subsidies.

The Communications Officer promotes the NZRCA to clubs, businesses, government and other stakeholders, and assists the Executive's external communications. This work involves preparing occasional Press Releases, maintaining the NZRCA list of stakeholders (a database), and ensuring the NZRCA's contact details are provided to stakeholders.

Some very good news for paddlers is the NZRCA has its first corporate sponsor. Hydraulics (PFD etc manufacturers in Murchison) have pledged a percentage of their earnings to help save rivers. Dave Richie reckons in the first year it might just about pay for a stamp and envelope to help take on Mighty River Power in court, but it's still a start. A Great Big Thanks to Dave and Clare.



*Ahh, dinner !
The Clarence way back
when.*

*For the Clarence in more
modern but still unusual
craft, see inside.*

Summer 2003 Contents

About NZ Canoeing	2
Executive & Officers	2
Newsplashes	3
Releases	3
Safety	4
Clarence	6
Canoeist of the year	7
Conservation & Access	8
Bolivia	9
Sargoods Weir	10
Membership Form	11

About *New Zealand Canoeing*

New Zealand Canoeing is the official newsletter of the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association (NZRCA) Inc. *NZ Canoeing* is published quarterly and distributed free to around 1,000 members of the NZRCA throughout New Zealand/Aotearoa.

The views expressed in *New Zealand 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 contributors and advertisers and the myriad of e-mail 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:

The Editor
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Wellington
editor@rivers.org.nz

The deadline for material for the next newsletter is 1 February 2004.

All map references are to NZMS Infomap 260 Topographical series.

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Food for thought.. this was posted a while ago in the forums on www.rivers.org.nz:

"Just wanted to say how amazing it is, and how lucky Kiwi paddlers are, to have a professional organisation that represents paddlers in the NZRCA. Hope you guys appreciate it and don't ruin it by not supporting the NZRCA and the subject of this thread.

In Australia, we are a voiceless minority. Our rivers are dammed and we don't have any representation to negotiate for releases. You guys don't even need releases because you have so many rivers. Yet you still have "rights of public use" and get them. Plus there's all the general "river conservation" work by the NZRCA. Wish we could say the same. Good old Aussie apathy.

(The Franklin River in Tasmania is probably the only "river issue" ever won in Australia.)"

www.river.org.nz

The website continues to grow despite webmaster Jon moving to London, in fact it seems to be gathering pace, maybe something to do with the amount of distracting paddling over there.

The latest changes include a nifty map on the front page linking to all the river gauges in the county, and there's an incident database coming soon.

Air NZ baggage

As reported last issue, Air NZ did return the oversize baggage fee from \$50 back to \$20, but now they are including it in your 20 kg luggage allowance (excess is \$5 / kg), plus have introduced new length restrictions. Their website says oversize baggage, giving examples of hanggliders and windsurfers, cannot be longer than 2.5m. Good to see our national airline knows their stuff.

Kayaking Illegal !

Let me see, what did I write in the last issue. Something about good progress with the MSA. Well the PFD rules in the new Part 91 of the Maritime Safety Rules turned out to be even worse than we had heard, basically they made kayaking illegal. Admittedly they have done a very sharp about-turn and are drawing up an amendment, which waives the PFD rules for kayakers until 2010. However all the rules in Part 91 which relate to rivers are dangerous and absurd for kayakers. As taxpayers we pay for this farce. It would be nice if they would just admit that us kayakers already have a very safety conscious culture and are best left to our own devices.

Paddler of the year

Well, officially canoeist of the year, I did intend to suggest we should change the name at the AGM but between the Astrid Anderson case and what clubs need to do about liability, the MSA rules, and the Land Access Reference Group's report, there wasn't a whole lot of extra time.

Anyway, the COTY is Alan Hoffman for doing absolutely heaps in the deep south to promote, organise and further kayaking. And canoeing now that I think about it, his kids came 2nd in the C2 in Oz... there's an impressive list of what he's been up to later this issue. Well done Alan.

Lolly scramble cancelled !

Yep, it's that liability stuff again. A bunch of events like the Queenstown Marathon and the Wanaka Mountain to Mountain race have been cancelled, and now a lolly scramble in Mosgiel too! Seems that kids might bash heads lunging for lollipops. Some might say our laws are going down the gurgler. I say get out there and break a few... go paddling!

Make sure you check the Rivers site www.rivers.org.nz for the latest Wairoa, Mangahao, Tekapo, Pukaki and Waikaretaheke release information.

This is particularly important for the Tekapo and Pukaki releases. The Nov 1-2 release did not happen because Meridian could not contact the coordinator. So they cancelled it, less than 24 hours before the release was scheduled.

The same thing almost happened in a subsequent release, however we managed to get the web page changed to name a new coordinator 12 hours out from the event. By the conditions of the releases, NZRCA must name the coordinator on the access page.

Hopefully a heap of people enjoyed the December Mangahao release, it isn't often that you get to do this river over summer. Depending on progress (with other claims, not NZRCA) in the Environment Court, hopefully we'll have Tongariro and Whakapapa releases joining this list by the end of next year.

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Safety

Public Liability

This has been a hot topic lately since the conviction of Astrid Anderson, the Le Race organiser, for criminal nuisance.

There is a lot of uncertainty about what clubs, instructors, trip leaders and event organiser may be liable for, how they may be liable and how to reduce the potential for a liability claim.

Canoe clubs are just as liable now as they have always been. A club has a responsibility to provide a 'duty of care' to people who are participating in any event that a club organises, be it a beginner instruction course, a river trip or a race. NZ law defines canoe clubs as commercial operators when they charge money for instruction courses, equipment hire or race entry fees. Because of this the 'duty of care' a club is required to provide can be the same as that required by a professional instructional organisation, however NZ courts recognise that volunteers working for a club may not be as highly skilled as professionals. To fulfil the requirements of this 'duty of care', a club needs to provide services that meet or exceed 'best practice'. 'Best practice' is measured against what the particular industry (kayak instruction, race organising etc.) is doing in NZ and around the world. If an accident or incident occurs and a club can demonstrate that they provided a service to the standard of 'best practice', then it is highly unlikely that they will be found liable. In fact, to be found liable to the level of 'criminal nuisance' you need to have a blatant disregard for the safety of a person, or digress hugely from the risk management plan that is in place.

While this sounds scary and difficult to achieve, it's not as bad as it sounds. The best way to avoid potential problems is to have a robust risk management strategy in place. An effective risk management strategy isn't just a document that sits and collects dust amongst the club Secretary's pile of papers. This is a document that requires careful consideration and should be constantly adapted and updated as required. This document shouldn't reveal any deficiencies in your club's practices but should just be a recording of what is already known and what is already being done. The document should detail hazards, potential and real risks, ways of avoiding or mitigating these and what to do if things still go wrong. Effective risk management also isn't just a comprehensively filled out form. It is using instructors, trip leaders and race organisers that have the qualifications and experience to put the written plan into practice. Just having a robust risk management strategy still isn't enough though. A club's instructors, trip leaders or race organisers need to strictly adhere to the requirements of the risk management plan. If somebody does something outside the boundaries of the risk management plan and an accident occurs, the potential for a liability claim is increased. Also if participants step outside the boundaries of what the risk management plan prescribes, then they need to be informed that their behaviour is unacceptable and they need to step back into line. If a participant continues to misbehave,

there must be consequences, for example being asked to leave the instruction course or being disqualified from the race.

So in summary, here is a checklist of ways to reduce your club's potential liability in respect of an accident:

1. Prepare a detailed risk management plan for any activity that your club undertakes.
2. Ensure that all your instructors, trip leaders and race organisers know the risk management plan backwards. Make copies available to everyone.
3. Stick to the plan. Never act outside of what the risk management plan allows except where failure to do so may cause death or injury.
4. Ensure your instructors, trip leaders and race organisers are suitably qualified and experienced.
5. Ensure that participants are fully aware of the guidelines and standards that apply to them and ensure that these are applied and observed. Have strategies and consequences in place for the possibility of a participant stepping outside the boundaries of the risk management plan.
6. Warn participants and spectators of any possible risks and hazards through as many means as possible.



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Ensuring that your instructors, trip leaders and race organisers are suitably qualified and experienced may be challenging. The requirements that your club has for qualifications and experience should be an integral part of your risk management plan. People, who are volunteering for a club, however tend to have a lower threshold of qualifications and experience necessary in the view of the courts.

NZRCA has a large pool of funds available to subsidise members who want to participate in River Safety or River Rescue courses. See the NZRCA website for more details.

Another excellent source of information can be found on the SPARC website at <http://www.sparc.org.nz/research/liability.php>. There is also good reading and food for thought at <http://homepages.paradise.net.nz/petemcd>.

So get your thinking caps on, pull out your clubs risk management plans, sit around and brainstorm any changes that need to happen. Then go and run your club's activities smartly and safely.

- from Glenn Murdoch, based on an article on the SPARC website.

OK... now we have to cover our backsides too or Mr Plod will be beating on the tent door:

"The above article is general in nature and is intended as a guide only. No responsibility can be accepted for those who rely on its content without obtaining specific legal advice."

Waimakariri hazards

ECAN has carried out flood protection works on the lower Waimakariri, these are made of trees lashed together with wire ropes and are designed to catch sediment and build up into stop banks over time. Unfortunately they'll also catch unwary kayakers.

Ian Gill-Fox of WWC reports that this was the most serious threat to life on a race day that he had ever seen.. "Our being proactive by directing people away from it certainly saved some white knuckles, probably prevented some swims, and possibly saved life. While river safety is our job and we realise this will always be the case, we feel that having to contend with man-made hazards of this nature is a bit much.

ECAN has been made aware of our concerns, but have basically fobbed us off. In fact a ranger stopped by me today to see what we were doing and said she could not see how any danger was present."

The situation is not going to change in a hurry, as even other ECan staff have described the ECan flood protection engineers as "astonishingly arrogant and utterly convinced of their right to do as they please" !

So just be very aware of the hazards, especially in the section between the Pylons and the Old Highway Bridge.

Jet boats on the Buller

Jet Boating New Zealand have notified the Tasman District Council that they intend applying to extend the area where the 5-knot speed restriction has been uplifted on the Buller River. Currently the speed limit has been uplifted all year round below the confluence of the Mangles River, just north of Murchison. The intended application will relate to lifting that 5-knot speed limit on the Buller River and its tributaries upstream of the Mangles confluence. If consent is granted it will allow all craft access, without speed limitation, further up the Buller, possibly up to the start of the Nelson Lakes National Park. Given the popularity of the Buller catchment with kayakers, and the narrower upper reaches, removing the speed limit creates obvious additional hazards for paddlers.

Maritime Safety Authority

Well at the AGM we sure got an earful from the forthright Ron Wastney (Nelson CC) about MSA's rule 91, or more to the point, that NZRCA did not know much about it. Rule 91 makes all our PFDs illegal, not to mention paddling any lines on river-left and paddling when river conditions are not "safe", whatever that means. Unfortunately MSA forgot to consult with us, or anybody else in kayaking, and you only know what you know.

Combining the word of the law in Rule 91 with the apparent new willingness on the part of the police to prosecute when things go wrong is kind of scary, and the prospect of being illegally in the way of a speeding jet boat on the Buller doesn't help.

The following scenario illustrates the problem:

- The TDC and MSA uplift the 5 knot limit for jetboats further up the Buller and tributaries
- a club group of kayakers is paddling around a bend, on the true left side of the river due to strainer hazards downstream on the true right side
- a jetboat travelling upstream on the same side (their starboard, as rule 91.17 mandates) hits and kills one of the kayakers

Who (if anyone) is liable?

- The jetboat driver because they killed someone?
- The MSA because they have jurisdiction, but did not seek swift water expertise and passed a law which is dangerous in the context ?
- The TDC because they approved the speed uplifting without consultation?
- The MSA because they also did not consult in the uplifting ?
- The trip leader who took a group down the port side of the river ?

We're currently asking the MSA, TDC and the Minister of Transport these questions...

Labour weekend on the Clarence

Being an ex-member of the NZRCA executive, I had heard a lot about the legendary Clarence River. In the 1991 River Survey it was rated as one of our most important wild and scenic rivers by kayakers all over New Zealand, and consequently the Association took on the might of Tranzrail in the Environment Court to protect the lower riverbed from bulldozers.

Stories from friends ranged from warm summer trips with lots of wine and cheese to roller coaster rides at high flow. Our Spring trip had a bit more than normal flow, an excellent (if freezing) amount of water.

Planning the trip, I read about the amount of class 1 and 2 and decided that double kayaks would be the way forward. Having had very few family trips on rivers, I invited my father and partner (both non paddlers) with a kayaking friend, Kate, and took a double sea kayak and a topo duo.

After contemplating various shuttle options, Ben Judge from Clarence River Rafting sorted a driver and we arrived at the put-in. A fantastic high country valley with snow sprinkled ominously close on the hills. The gear packed we waved goodbye to the rafting team who were also putting on, and floated down to our first class 2 rapid.

We were relieved to find that a double sea kayak does not need railing - all you need to do is line it up at the top of a rapid and paddle enthusiastically - we made our way through the first gorge and the famed Chute rapid. Due to the flow, the rock that creates the chute was instead forming a substantial hole. Kate and Pete lead the boat in the topo duo, and we discovered that the considerable momentum of our loaded kayaks carried us through all the class 3 features in this and other rapids in the first gorge.

With the weather closing in and reducing daylight, we chose a campsite with rare totara trees. An excellent supply of firewood meant a blaze to dry gear and cook a substantial thai curry.

Our prayers for clearing weather were not answered the following morning, as we woke to more rain and southerly winds. Paddling down as it sleeted, I was the coldest I had been on a river since my first days winter paddling as a beginner.

We chose to camp early and started another spectacular fire, and with an elaborate arrangement of flies, managed to dry much of the gear. Drinking wine and demolishing our supply of chocolate, we giggled and watched in amazement as nearby hunters took shots at geese.

Next morning, the sun was out and we paddled through the most spectacular country we'd seen. Stark hillsides, with towering Kaikoura ranges covered in new snow in the bright sunshine had me agreeing that this is one of our national treasures. The considerable flow meant we were often covering 15km per hour, and in the afternoon we descended into the sheer red ravines of Sawtooth gorge.



Kate, Pete and some big country on the Clarence

The long awaited Jawbreaker rapid was hard to scout - I had no idea approaching the rapid where was the best place to be. However, a paddle signal from Kate pointed straight down the middle, and we sailed over huge waves, whooping and yelling. The rapids were straightforward, but the combination of large bluffs and a 5.5m boat meant we were paddling hard to make the simple moves. When things went well we charged over features and funny water without a wobble, however occasionally we spun on boily eddy lines, frantically keeping the rudder

away from the cliff. Once out of the gorge we made camp. Finishing off the wine, we were still on a high from our excellent day.

On our final day, we unexpectedly came across a huge hole. The topo duo flipped and Kate and Pete bailed out. Without time to change line in the sea kayak we put on speed and charged through the middle, only to be caught and sucked back in. We both swam out of the boat, Miriam miraculously rescuing my camera in its pelican case as it floated by. The sea kayak stayed in the hole for another 10 minutes or so, while Kate and Pete got the topo duo into an eddy. When the sea kayak came free, Kate valiantly launched into the river after it, and after a dodgy moment or two on a bluff, managed to get it to shore. Amazingly, as we took stock on the bank (in the sun) we had only lost two maps, a teva, a pair of sunglasses and a sponge.

Cold from the freezing water, we leaped back in the boats and paddled a speedy 40km before lunch. Fire lighting during lunch broke all speed records, as I found a dead shrub, added white spirits, and lit it. Several more dead shrubs, hot noodles and meal mates helped us recharge and cheer up. Not long after, we floated under the Glen Alder bridge, our first definite confirmation since our swim of where we were.

The lower Clarence is a romp of big wave trains though gentle farm scenery. It was great to be there and appreciate what was saved from the bulldozers, as the rocks that make these rapids are far better in the river than being used for a new ferry terminal. At the very civilised time of 2.30pm we arrived at the State Highway 1 bridge. Once in dry clothes, we popped open a few beers and celebrated an awesome trip.

- Polly Miller

Alan Hoffman: COTY 2003

Alan Hoffman is the NZRCA Canoeist of the Year for 2003. He has been active in the kayaking scene for 20-25 years now; and spends many enthusiastic hours passing on his vast knowledge of kayaking to anyone willing to learn. Kirsty Hoffman provided this rundown on what he's been up to lately:

Over the past year he has actively coached, promoted and competed in kayaking from grassroots level to an international level. His recent focus has been on slalom kayaking, coaching, managing teams, building courses, competing and watching his sons at competitions.

His achievements include:

- Coached students from Mt Aspiring College on a regular basis in whitewater kayaking and slalom kayaking.
- Coached the Southern Slalom Training Squad, (a small group of South Island kayakers), Alan organized coaching camps, with top NZ coaches, many training weekends and countless competitions for this group and his hard work paying off when eight of the squad gained selection into the NZ Junior Development Team which went to Australia to compete at the Age Group Champs and the Australian Nationals in Tasmania in January 2003. His two sons Nic and Mike also competed at the Youth Olympic Festival in Penrith, Sydney during January 2003 and gained a Silver Medal in C2, after a lot of intensive training by Alan.
- Alan is a predominant member of the [Central Otago White Water Canoe Club](#), and has spent many hours over the last year getting together submissions for the Contact Energy Water Rights hearings to try and get some compensation for kayakers over the loss of rapids, etc. from the hydro-electric development.
- Alan is also involved in the development of the [Tekapo White Water course](#), running several successful events, and attending many meetings to get the course up and running.
- In January 2003 Alan was Manager of the NZ Junior Kayak Development Team which went to Australia, as manager he spent many long hours organizing the trip, and while in Australia managed the team and helped out with coaching. The trips was very successful the team gaining 79 medals.
- In between organising many slalom kayaking events he had the time to train for himself and compete successfully in the Veterans section at many competitions.
- The South Island training squad returned from the National Champs recently with a very creditable performance winning 56 medals between the 14 competitors. This is largely due to Alan's enthusiastic coaching and persistent training.
- Alan has been on the WWSNZ Committee for a couple of years now actively trying to promote the sport of slalom kayaking in the South Island and New Zealand.
- Alan has been a member of [Whitewater Canoe Club](#) and [Huka Falls Canoe Club](#).

Alan spends many hours on rivers, beside rivers, moving rocks in rivers, paddling on rivers, coaching and passing on his passion for the sport, which is a huge part of his and his family's life.

Conservation and Access.

Graeme McIntyre has moved on to become the Access officer, however we have a new recruit from Wellington for the North Island Conservation officer's job, Duncan Catanach. Down south, Muzz Baker has been busy at the Rangitata hearing, so far in a professional capacity on behalf of anglers. The group has heaps on:

Rangitata

After 4 weeks in the Environment Court, the Rangitata hearing is only halfway and the kayakers and rafters evidence has not been presented yet. Court will resume on May 10 and our case will be presented early in that block.

Clutha River / Contact Energy

NZRCA and Central Otago Whitewater have appealed the Otago Regional Council's decision on the renewals of the Clutha Hydro scheme. The result was generally good in that careful consideration was given to the needs of kayakers. However, NZRCA and COW are of the opinion that more is required to mitigate for the major losses suffered in the inundation of Sargood's Weir, Bannockburn and the Gap. Hopefully this will be able to be resolved by negotiation with Contact Energy.

Aoraki Water Trust

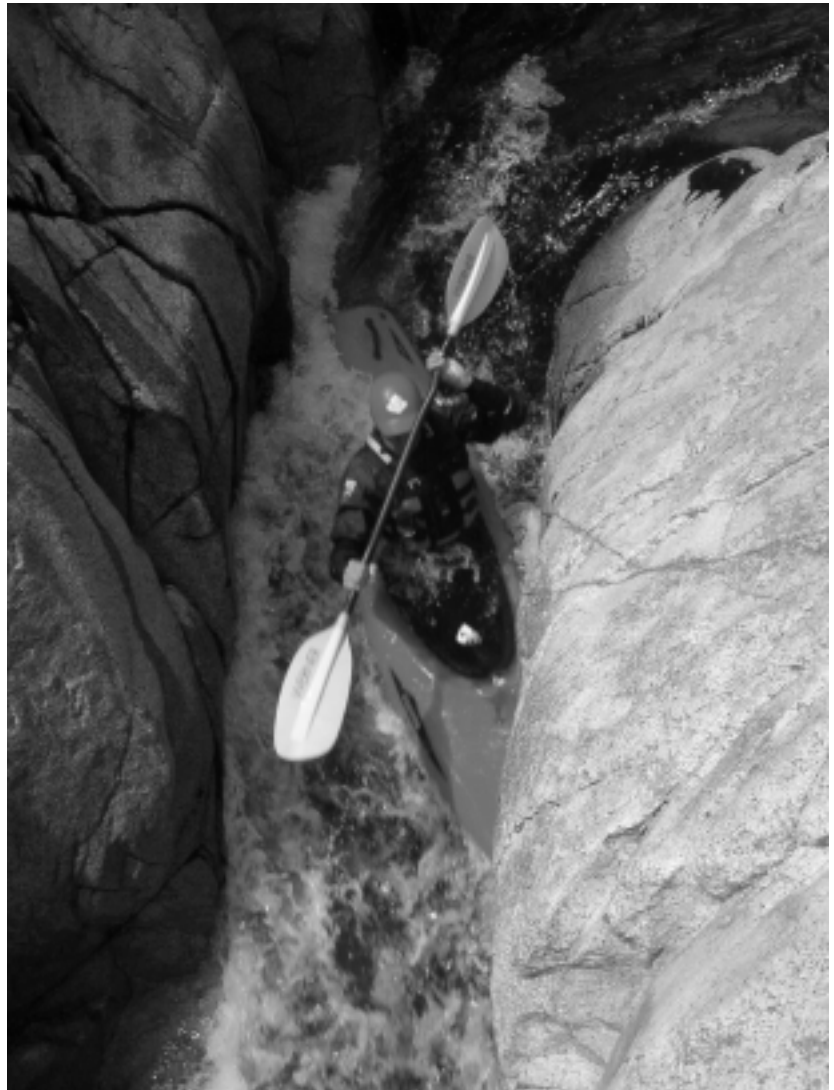
A submission has been lodged with ECAN on the Aoraki Water Trust taking more water out of Tekapo. While it does not affect paddlers directly, we are keen to see that our own allocation does not get reduced for Pukaki and Tekapo releases.

Mighty River Power

NZRCA has lodged an appeal on the result of the resource consent hearing for Mighty River Power's water rights application. Despite a lot of effort by Mike Birch and Wade Bishop, the commissioners still gave paddlers basically no mitigation for the loss of amenity at Fulljames. The decision is totally out of step with the mitigation awarded in other recent decisions. It looks like NZRCA will be fighting this one all the way to the Environment Court.

Land Access Reference Group Report

This report was commissioned by the Rural Affairs Minister, Jim Sutton. It is an attempt to define public access rights and processes throughout the high country and to rivers and beaches. NZRCA has submitted on the report. While generally very positive for access (and there had been worries about this as it came out of the Ministry for Rural Affairs), we were still concerned about access to the Queens Chain, as opposed to merely along it. Also, there is a tendency to define a navigable river by measuring the width of its channel, which is not helpful for access to rivers like the Upper Waiau above the Narrows.



Simon Callahan proving the Upper Kakapotahi is navigable. Photo: Jiff.

Foreshore Access

Our new man Duncan launched straight into the breach, representing NZRCA in a meeting with Deputy PM Michael Cullen on the foreshore claims. NZRCA and many other outdoor organisations such as Fish and Game back the government's plan to declare the foreshore and seabed as public domain, rather than owned by the Crown.

DOC General Policy

DOC is reviewing General Policy with potentially adverse consequences for recreational kayaking.

The recommendation in DOC's proposed new General Policy for National Parks is to actively discourage vehicle use where not provided for in Management Plans. This covers canoes and kayaks, as well as helicopters. Very few management plans (if any) explicitly mention canoes and kayaks, so if the General Policy is accepted as it stands, DOC would be bound to discourage kayakers from National Parks (for example, Kahurangi). This will likely effect awarding of concessions for helicopter operators.

Similarly, the Conservation General Policy also 'actively discourages' vehicle use [refer 9.6 (b)].

The General Policy documents are extremely important as all Conservancy Strategies and National Park Plans percolate down from then. NZRCA will be making a detailed submission.

Steep Action in Bolivia

The Bolivian Whitewater Expedition consisted of Simon Coward, Luke Boddington, Zac Shaw, Nate Mack and Dave Moore. All were amped and keen for some time amongst it following their passion for kayaking. Full credit to Simon who plotted this adventure over a year ago and had the drive to make it happen.



First challenge was landing at over 4000m a day after leaving NZ. A couple of days on oxygen in a La Paz hospital sorted Luke out and the team was good to go! Magnificent peaks, cloud forests, bad roads and friendly locals greeted the boys, not to mention a vast range of gastrointestinal problems. Poor hygiene, thin air, desperate travel methods and a bunch fresh whitewater was our world. As is the way of the outdoors we had good days and bad. Everything from classic "picture perfect" drops on sunny days to scary chocolate superhighways and team beatings in serious hydraulics... yes three at a time, in the same hole. A good chapter in the book of "When good days go bad..." Bolivia offers a very "holistic" experience, nothing is easy. You have to earn your fun and that made it all the better. An unforeseen bonus in our adventure was a journey to the source of our liquid roads, Mt Illimani 6500m.

It's satisfying to be back in NZ after a classy top-end adventure with a bunch of talented people. Success is measured in a safe return, some incredible memories and a bunch of new knowledge about whitewater paddling in one of the world's coolest countries.

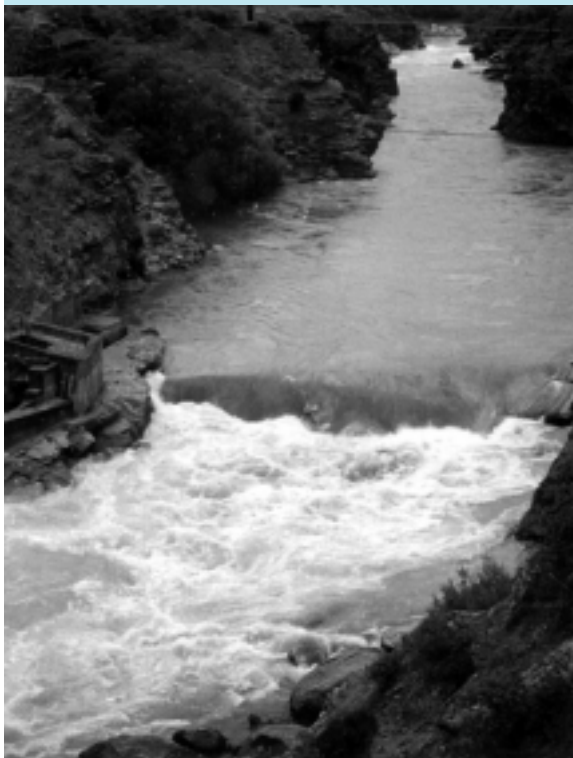


Dave Moore, Luke Boddington, Simon Coward, Nate Mack, Zac Shaw

Dave Moore is a NZOIA/NZRCA level II training provider in Chch.
027 282 2929 inspiredaction@xtra.co.nz

Big thanks to the Kiwi sponsors who helped make it happen: Bliss-stick kayaks, Hydraulics, and Adventure Philosophy.
- Dave Moore

Legends of Aotearoa Whitewater: Sargood's Weir



Here's why we're chasing Contact Energy for some decent mitigation. Sargoods was huuuge, one of the great big-water rapids in the world. Now, no thanks to the Clyde Dam, there is just a 20 cm riffle where the Kawarau stalls at Lake Dunstan. The mighty weir can still be seen underneath.

Mick Hopkinson made the first descent in 1980 (check out <http://www.rivers.org.nz/article/380>) , followed by Rob Lessor in 1983. Dirk Paschier from Christchurch made the first by a local in 1984.

Then the floodgates opened a bit, ten or so more did it before this run in December 1986 by NZRCA President Robin Rutter-Baumann. A few of our presidents seem to have been on Sargoods when arguably they shouldn't have been.. probably this is why none of them have made Safety Officer.

So here's Robin showing why everyone used to call him "Rutter the Nutter". It was after one of those ten-year floods that drowns Queenstown every couple of years, and suffice to say that Robin found it all a bit bigger than it looked from up on the road. It didn't help that he started off by missing the motorway line through the guts of the weir and did several ends in the haystack instead. At this point your run-out is half a km of grade 5 very big water !

*Safety Plan:
Don't stuff up!*



*A few ends and roll
attempts later*



Robin finds all the sweet lines



Murky under here, wonder what's next.

Same place, next day...
 (quotes approximate.. it was many moons and even more beers ago !)

Robin: Hi Mick, how're ya doing? Going to run Sargoods?
 Mick: No, its too high. Maybe tomorrow.
 Robin: Oh, but I ran it yesterday..
 Mick: Bloody Idiot!

And the day after, by the massive hole at Smith Falls in high flow..

Robin: Do you think I can go in there?
 Mick: Oh, sure you can..
 Robin (some time later, swimming past with pieces of slalom boat) You said I could go in there !
 Mick: Aye, but I didn't say I thought you could get out!



Wish I'd checked out out the bottom quarter mile..



Top of the line PVC spraydeck



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Additional support for our work in Conservation, Access, Safety and Education is gratefully appreciated.

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New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association Inc.

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