



# New Zealand Canoeing 05.1

## A season of it...

This season has seen some significant progress for the NZRCA, but also some significant new challenges emerging.

Three major new agreements have come to fruition in the last few months. In December the new 35 year Tongariro Power Development resource consents became operational. NZRCA negotiated releases on the Tongariro, Whakapapa and Moawhango from Genesis Energy. By the time you read this the first releases on the Tongariro (Access 13 and 14 on one day, then 35 cumecs on Access 10 the next) have probably occurred. There are more releases planned in Spring.

In the case of Ngaawaparua, NZRCA's case for mitigation for all the whitewater amenities drowned under the Waikato dams was turned down at the resource consent hearing. NZRCA appealed to the Environment Court and appeared before an Environment Court Commissioner in mediation with Mighty River Power. After much work an agreement was signed with Mighty River Power. There will be no scheduled releases, however MRP undertake to honour any requests for releases for scheduled events. This is an interim agreement with a 5 year monitoring period.

The latest big win is in Central Otago. As mitigation for amenities lost to the Clutha and Hawea dams, Contact Energy is funding the construction of a major play and slalom site on the Hawea. Legendary three-time World Cup Slalom Champion Scott Shipley is designing the features.

Huge thanks must go to Mike Birch, Wade Bishop, Gordy Rayner and particularly to Muzz Baker for preparing presentations for hearings, travelling, meeting, presenting, getting squashed by organisations with multi-million dollar budgets, then picking up the pieces and fighting back. Awesome work.

The new challenges paddlers are facing are fairly immediate. The Kaituna and the Mokau are under serious threat. Little Huka and all the other significant rapids on the Mokau are proposed to be drowned by a new dam, for which King Country Energy claims there is little impact on kayakers. Anyone who has an interest in this river

*continued on page 3..*

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*Cam Ryland drops into the Moawhango, Central North Island*

## 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:  
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All map references are to NZMS Infomap 260 Topographical series.

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*as elected at the NZRCA AGM*

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## Be Prepared - Save a Friend, Save Yourself

Do a **River Safety or River Rescue** course and gain knowledge that could give you the edge to make a difference. Subsidies for NZRCA members: \$60.

We have the money to help you, take it - we can't use it for anything else. The form to claim the subsidy is on our website. Print it out, fill it in and post it.

Take control! Organise a group of people you paddle with, or from your club. Find an instructor on the website (look under Safety, then Safety Course) and organise a time to suit you. Many will travel to you if need be.

Course page: <http://www.rivers.org.nz/education/safetycourses.php>

**It's easy!**

should make themselves heard, see the Mokau special inside. In the case of the Kaituna, Bay of Plenty Electricity proposes to build a dam which will drown half of the “Awesome Gorge” and all of the “Gnarly Gorge” sections of the river. See page 4 for what you can do to fight this.

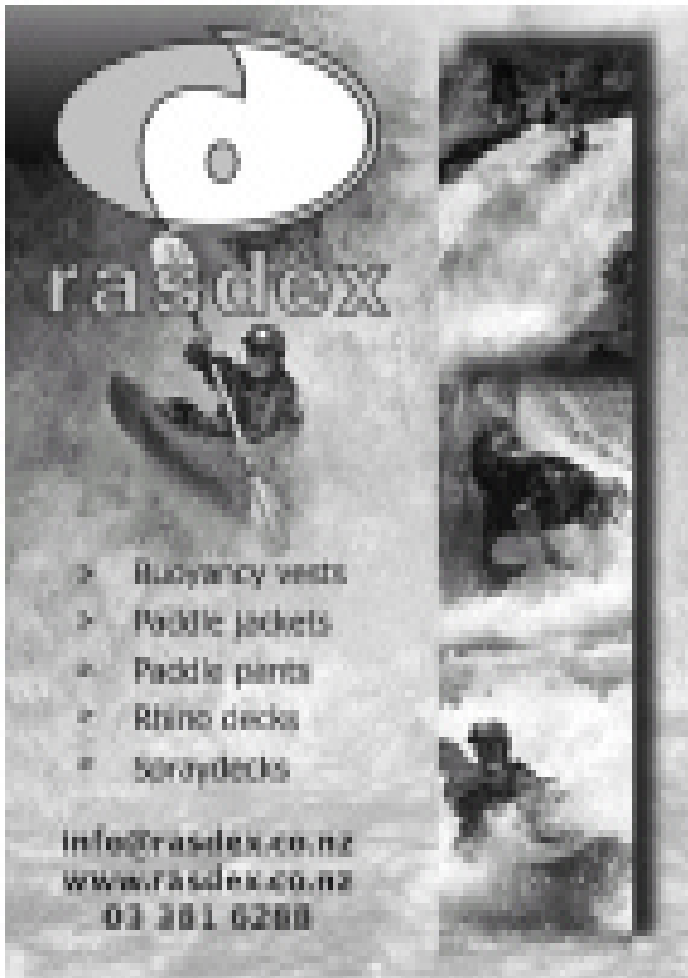
## Living Rivers Coalition

A major new force has appeared on the conservation horizon, the Living Rivers Coalition. The idea behind this is basically that with irrigation, effluent, energy and political assaults on all sides, an advocacy group fighting specifically on behalf of rivers is now required. The LRC has been created for this purpose by Forest and Bird, Fish and Game, FMC (Federated Mountain Clubs) and NZRCA. See page 8 in this issue for more, including the opening speech by NZRCA patron Hugh Canard.

## And some carnage reports..

This season the sport of sieve swimming seems to have become well established on the West Coast. The sieve in Billiards on the Arahura was swum, as was the cave at the end of the Upper Kakapotahi. Prize winning exploit so far however is to the guy who swam on the Perth above Scone Hut. He got body-pinned inside a sieve, then managed to wriggle out of the pin

only to get stuck between boulders by his helmet. He took this off, wriggled further, and popped up trapped in a small airspace under more large boulders, still up to his neck in water. After some amount of freaking his mates managed to find him, and then practised their macramé skills for some considerable time to actually unearth him. The NZRCA would like to advise that sieve swimming may be costly at the ensuing session at the Mahinapua. Take it easy out there people!



## AGM Announcement

This year the NZRCA Annual General Meeting is being held in Taupo, on the weekend of July 16/17.

A day of hard grind will be spent on the wave at Ngaawaparua, the other will be devoted to business.

The annual report, accounts, precise location and timetable will be posted on the NZRCA website closer to the time.

We are very keen to hear from anyone willing to help on the committee as there are a couple of vacancies.

See [www.rivers.org.nz](http://www.rivers.org.nz).

## Releases

Tekapo: Releases all through April, see the website

Whakapapa: Aug 27, Sept 10. These may be modified due to Whio nesting, see the website.

Tongariro Access 10: April 2 & 16, Sept 24. 35 cumecs.

Tongariro Access 14: April 3 & 17, Sept 25. 30 cumecs. NOTE: The second Tongariro release may be moved to a date in June due to the low water level in Lake Moawhango.

Always check the NZRCA website, [www.rivers.org.nz](http://www.rivers.org.nz) and click on Events and Releases, to see the latest release schedules and any last minute changes.

## Conservation Update

### Water Programme of Action

The Government's Water Programme of Action, part of the sustainable development programme, continues to blunder along its not so merry way. In December last year a public discussion paper was released (see <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/water/prog-action/index.html>).

This document is a classic example of bureaucratic vagueness which almost never augers well. A few examples will show what I mean:

- It gives a range of options / mechanisms for ensuring “efficient” water allocation and water quality but no criteria for examining them.
- It asserts that “setting environmental bottom-lines and allocation limits is costly and contentious”, but without them how can the interests of kayakers and other instream users and conservation values be fully recognised?
- It is not clear where the Government thinks the onus of proof lies to show that a proposal has no negative environmental effects.
- It signals that current water conservation order provisions need examination, but does not say why. Given the political climate (only confirmed by Ministry documents obtained under the OIA), one doesn't hold a lot of hope for the long-term protection of natural river environments by water conservation orders or by an alternative means.

The only good news is that the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) now acknowledges that there are rivers (e.g., Arahura) etc. which are of “national importance” for kayakers (see <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/water/national-importance-rec-dec04/index.html>). Thanks to all kayakers who responded to a MfE survey in early 2004 from which this data was taken.

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#### What you can do:

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The submission date of March 18 has already passed, NZRCA put in a submission then. There may be further consultation, keep an eye on the Programme of Action website (<http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/water/prog-action/index.html>), and if you are not a member already, what you can do is join the NZRCA !

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### RMA Review or “Think Big II”

The Government monolith seems to be storming ahead. Basically, the proposed amendments will limit the ability of organisations (especially voluntary organisations with limited resources like ours) to participate in any resource consent process. It also give the central Government sweeping powers to direct local councils for projects such as new hydroelectric schemes and irrigation schemes. With organisations such as ours having limited or no powers to object, the prognosis is not good.

Submissions to the Select Committee have now closed. A huge thanks to those clubs who put in submissions opposing the “Think Big II” changes. Hopefully, we can change the Government's opinion during the Select Committee hearing process.

### Kaituna

According to Bay of Plenty Electricity, public consultation with affected parties has started for a proposed 7 m high dam which is going to be built half way down the Awesome Gorge section of the Kaituna River near Rotorua. Water is then diverted in a canal on the right bank for about 2.5 km until it drops 66 metres down a pipe into the power station where generators create some 15 to 20 MW.

It effectively means that the Kaituna River will be backed up to the so called Trout Pool Falls. Below the proposed weir only a marginal residual flow of around 5 cumes (average flow down the river during the year is 26 cumes) will be allowed, making the WW section below the weir unpaddable. The “dry section” will affect the second half of Awesome Gorge (the tight gorge section with the waterfall) and the extremely difficult “Gnarly Gorge” which follows right after the Awesome Gorge take-out. Although “Gnarly Gorge” is rarely paddled it has been negotiated several times in the last couple of years by groups of up to 8 people and this section of the Kaituna River is undoubtedly one of the most scenic and extreme whitewater trips in the North Island, if not in all of New Zealand.

#### What you can do:

Please register with the the BoP Generation Manager as an affected party wishing formal notification of the resource consent:. Then submit as soon as it is notified.

John Smyth  
Generation Manager  
52 Commerce St.  
PO Box 404  
Whakatane 3080  
Ph 0800 500 710  
Fax 07-307 0922  
email [jsmyth@bopelec.co.nz](mailto:jsmyth@bopelec.co.nz)

It is to be emphasised that this section of the Kaituna River is under very real and serious threat and anyone who would like to raise their concerns against this dam project is urged to get in touch with BoP Electricity.

**STANDING  
TALL**

**BLISS-STICK**

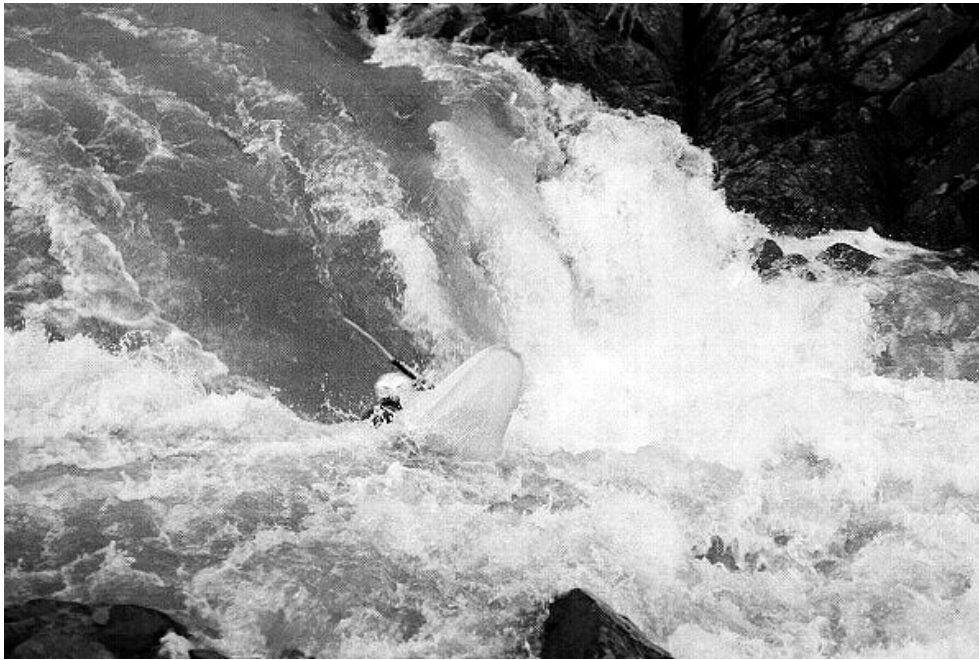
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## Death of the Mokau !?

*King Country Energy Ltd is applying to Waitomo District Council and the Waikato Regional Council (Environment Waikato) for resource consents relating to the construction of a 44m dam on the Mokau River, 4.3 km downstream of the Wairere Falls station, impounding water back up to that station.*

*This dam will permanently inundate a large portion of the normal Mokau run (see Graham Charles Guidebook – p.84) - some of the best and most consistently available kayaking available in the Taranaki / Waitomo region. We have included an article from an old NZ Canoeing magazine which tells of some early canoeing exploits on this river. As the article indicates, the river has been paddled for over half a century – it would be a tragedy if this superb run was lost for eternity.*



*Ali Quinn on (or is that 'in') Little Huka, Mokau River.*

### **First Descent of the Mokau..** *from New Zealand Canoeing Bulletin 11; 1979*

To the average motorist travelling on the Te Kuiti to New Plymouth highway the Mokau would appear just another sluggish river. To some of the original members of the N.Z.C.A. (1954) however, it will bring to mind many beautiful sights and many hair-raising thrills.

The river was explored in two stages. On the first occasion in December 1951, 12 members travelling in two large rubber dinghies, a diminutive one-man dinghy and a two-man folding canoe, pushed off below the tail race of the Wairere Falls Power Station. They had travelled by truck from Te-Kuiti station late the night before but crawled from warm sleeping bags before sunrise to explore the nearby limestone caves before departing.

The first view of the 'river' which they hoped would carry them 60 miles to the coast, came as a shock until it was realised that the water was diverted through the power station. The tail race bore the boats downstream however, and all went well until an unusually smooth reach ended abruptly at a small waterfall. Consternation ensued as none of the party had experienced this type of hazard before. A portage was decided on and the boats were carried past and reloaded in the pool below.

Rapids and falls then followed in a quick succession, a peculiar rock formation creating sharp ledges right across the river. The excitement of shooting foaming rapids, many

dropping 5 to 6 feet at a time, must be experienced to be appreciated.

As confidence in the indestructibility of the rubber dinghies increased, bigger and bigger hurdles were tackled and portages were kept to a minimum. Rain which had been threatening now came down steadily and as they approached what would have proved to be the longest portage, three volunteers abandoned any hope of keeping dry and decided to take it on.

The resemblance to the Waikato's highest fall prompted its naming 'Little Huka'. The small dinghy was carefully lashed over the bow of the 12 foot craft. Three bedraggled volunteers crouched quivering in the stern. The photographic vultures hovered eagerly over their prey. "They're off!" The boat tipped stern foremost over the first rock fall. She swept towards the fall. "Turn her round!" But there was no chance now, the crew were too busy hanging on. Still stern first, she entered the foaming race, took the turn at the bottom, dropped over the narrow fall, boat and crew disappeared in the mass of foam, to pop up and relax in the mirror-like pool below.

The river had now become most attractive. Bush clad banks brought majestic tree ferns right to the water's edge, while in places towering rock cliffs added to the grandeur of the scene. Further downstream the main party were surprised to see the leading boat hauled out on the boulders in the shelter of an overhanging cliff. The river at this point appeared to be full of sharp blue-metal blocks which had gashed the boat's thin rubber floor. The billy was boiled to cheer the crew while the boat was dried over the fire before patching. Lunch and patching completed, we once more took to the boats only to discover an even larger cut in the big boat. A life jacket was pressed over the hole and the trip continued.

During the afternoon the Mokau-iti, along awaited tributary, appeared ahead. The main stream, indeed, seemed the smaller as it shot down a rocky race towards a towering rock wall which turned both rivers' flow. Down rushed the big boat – thump! Stopped by the wall, its flexible bow, piled high with packs folded backwards neatly dropping the topmost pack upon the pile of bodies which found themselves precipitated upon the flooring.

A very pleasant campsite was chosen a short distance further down the now much larger river. Our visiting Australian student had no sleeping bag but he was used to curling up beside the fire in an immense great coat. The clouds cleared and the full moon shone brightly as we warmed ourselves around the campfire after enjoying a substantial meal.

Next morning, messengers were sent to the nearest farmhouse to divert the truck to Totoro Bridge. The weather did its best to make amends for the day before, the party basking in warm sunshine until the two returned, filled with tales of weird limestone caverns and impassable surges on the reach which the boats were about to enter.

The river was now more suitable for the canoe which had been carried more than paddled the day before. The placid reaches where reflections shone unbroken by rapids were not appreciated as the longer the reach, the steeper the rapid was which sparkled below it. The scenery became grander and crews lay sleepily under the scorching sun, dangling their feet in the water as they munched sandwiches for lunch. Suddenly a scream broke the silence. The cause of this panic was displayed – a heel ringed deeply with red tooth marks. The victim pointed to where his half eaten sandwich floated on the water. An immense eel slowly disappeared, twisting back to the gloomy haunts from which the smell of meat had attracted it. It was fortunate that rubber was not one its favourite dishes.

Limestone cliffs now lifted above tall Rimu trees gracing the banks. Huge sculptured rocks lay at odd angles to the river bed. Next landmark was the Mangaotaki, a tributary entering on the right bank. Could that be it roaring around the next bend? The glassy river disappeared behind great limestone blocks. Approaching at ever increasing speed, we drew ashore to investigate. The river tumbled between the blocks, no passage being wide enough to take the big boat. 25 yards beyond lay a sunlit pool into which flowed the Mangaotaki. It was necessary to drop some 20 feet to reach it.

The foldboat, with several stringers cracked by rocks, was dismantled and stowed aboard the 12 foot dinghy. This unfortunate craft was now not only carrying 7 hefty adventurers together with their towering pile of packs but also 50% of the boats in which we had started the trip.

Limestone cliffs now rose sheer from the water's edge – their sculptured crests appearing like battlements and balconies high above. Several more portages were made where the whole river was blocked by great masses fallen from the cliffs above. It was at one of these that we overtook some fellow canoeists travelling in aluminium canoes, who, unknown to us, had left Wairere Falls two hours earlier than we did.

The setting sun threw weird shadows across the water as we neared the end of the gorge. We ground over a shallow rapid and there was the spidery suspension bridge. We had completed no more than 10 miles but excitement and magnificent scenery compensated the shortened run. All looked forward to completing the trip to the coast shortly.

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## Mokau Hydroelectric Power Scheme

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### The Gory Details

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- The current get-in for the normal Mokau run is the Wairere Falls station. The proposed hydro scheme will drown the “Little Huka” rapid, a major test piece on the river, Corkscrew Rapid and several kilometers of good rock gardens and 1m drops ideal for grade 3 paddlers.
- This section is currently runnable at most flows – its loss would have an enormous effect on the paddling community as it is one of the few runnable rivers during low summer flows.
- It is likely that there will be downstream implications for paddlers as the scheme will only become a “run-of-the-river” scheme when the river flow is over 28 cumecs. This will potentially limit the times when (what is left of) the Mokau run can be paddled. It will also potentially limit runs on the lower section of the Mangataoki River (see p. 83 of the guidebook) which has its get-out point on the Mokau River.

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### What you can do to save the Mokau

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- Contact [diane.palmer@ew.govt.nz](mailto:diane.palmer@ew.govt.nz) at Environment Waikato and John Moran, District Planning Officer (ph 07-878-8801) and asked to be sent a copy of the resource consent application.
- Or check this save-the-Mokau website, [www.resenv.co.nz/nomokaudam](http://www.resenv.co.nz/nomokaudam) which has all the details plus the consent application and submission form.
- Prepare a submission.. **this is due April 18**
- guidelines for preparing a submission are available on the NZRCA website - <http://www.rivers.org.nz/article/HowToMakeASubmission>. NZRCA will definitely be submitting on the consent application, but we advise any clubs or individuals who paddle the Mokau to submit also.

# Living Rivers

## Living Rivers Coalition launched in December 2004

*Duncan Catanach, North Island Conservation Officer, reports on the NZRCA joining the Living Rivers Coalition*

Our rivers are under more pressure than ever before. Even when rivers have been given the equivalent status of a national park, a Water Conservation Order, it does not seem to be enough. There are many hydro schemes on the drawing boards, some of which (e.g., the Gowan River, Mokau and Kaituna River) are unfortunately edging closer to reality. The Government has proposed legislation amending the Resource Management Act that not only gives greater prominence to large projects, particularly irrigation and hydroelectric schemes, but also puts greater limits on the ability of the NZRCA to oppose these projects.

In response to this, the NZRCA recently joined Fish and Game, Forest and Bird and the Federated Mountain Clubs to form the Living Rivers Coalition ([www.livingrivers.org.nz](http://www.livingrivers.org.nz)). It is a timely development - the need for a united front has never been stronger. The Coalition also builds on a proven model - for many years the NZRCA has worked successfully with Fish and Game and others to protect rivers such as the Mohaka, Rangitata, Buller and other rivers with Water Conservation Orders.

The Coalition was launched on Wednesday 15 December. Hugh Canard, the NZRCA's patron, gave a witty and poignant speech at the media launch - it's well worth a read, so we've reprinted the speech on the next page.

### *Living Rivers Coalition Campaigns*

The Living Rivers Coalition has already been busy. On January 22, the Coalition launched a signage campaign to highlight the unhealthy state of many of our rivers. This received significant media coverage, and the issue created enough interest to stay on the front pages of some newspapers (e.g., the Nelson Mail – thanks Ron Wastney and others, from the Nelson Canoe Club, for your help in the campaign) for quite a few days.

The Living Rivers also campaigned about the proposed Gowan River hydroelectric scheme during the Buller Festival on 4 – 6 March. The Buller Festival is a celebration of

whitewater paddling and the wild, majestic and still largely unmodified Buller catchment. Much of the Buller catchment, including the Gowan River, was protected under a Water Conservation Order in 2001 - the nearest thing to a “national park” for rivers – after an application originally made in 1987. Only a few years later we find this order and every water conservation order (e.g., Mohaka, Motu, Rangitata) under threat.

We are hoping that this and other “Living Rivers” campaigns will raise politicians’ and the general public’s awareness of the importance of “living rivers” whether it is for kayaking, fishing or to preserve biodiversity or scenic beauty.

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### *What you can do to help save our rivers*

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- Send an email to [niconservation@rivers.org.nz](mailto:niconservation@rivers.org.nz) or [membership@rivers.org.nz](mailto:membership@rivers.org.nz) if you are willing to help (or be a contact point for a club) on Living Rivers campaigns.
- Subscribe to the Living Rivers e-zine ([www.livingrivers.org.nz](http://www.livingrivers.org.nz)) – this will keep you up-to-date on key issues affecting rivers and campaigns.
- Encourage others to join the NZRCA.

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Thanks in anticipation for your help - our rivers will be the better for it.

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***The Living Rivers Coalition Launch – from left to right: Kevin Hackwell, Conservation Manager, Forest and Bird; Hugh Canard, Patron, NZ Recreational Canoeing Association; Sandy Lawrie, Chair, Fish & Game NZ; John Wilson, Federated Mountain Clubs***



## Hugh Canards's speech at the Living rivers Coalition launch, 15th December 2004

*Tena koutou katoa. He Hugh ahau. He kaiawhina me nga awa, no reira tena koutou katoa.*

Today I represent the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association. We are an association of canoe clubs and individual members from throughout New Zealand. Canoeing has a long history in this country, especially if one recalls that the first settlers migrated here over huge distances of unknown ocean by canoe. Each of us has some relationship with our rivers, depending on them for the bulk of our energy, our agriculture, our landscape, and our recreation.

An increasing number of younger New Zealanders are discovering the simple pleasures of paddling a boat on a river or lake. Try counting the number of roof racks in your city with kayak cradles. We are quite good at paddling too. We are still winning Olympic medals in canoeing, and we have the best adventure racers and multi-sport athletes in the world. If you go to almost any swimming pool you will see lots of young people tearing up the place playing canoe polo. Many high schools now have canoeing as part of their outdoor education programmes.

What most paddlers value most of all, however, is to paddle on a natural free flowing river. The fastest growth area in canoeing world wide is whitewater canoeing. Every weekend in most of the remoter reaches of New Zealand's rivers there are people paddling little boats in wild water in scenic surroundings and loving it. Part of our problem in this media age is that what we do is done out of the public eye.

What do we value? Natural flowing rivers in natural surroundings. Whitewater canoeing requires commitment, development of personal skills, and a certain amount of courage. These are attributes I think we can agree are valuable in any nation, particularly for young people.

I started paddling back in the late 1970s when there were no kayak shops and most of us made our own canoes and safety gear. My companions and I survived through sheer luck and the ability to swim almost anything. By the 1970s the major rivers of New Zealand had been dammed and inundated. The Waikato, the Tongariro, the Clutha, the Waiau, and the Waitaki were all under large hydro lakes or the Ministry of Works were in the process of finishing the job off, or 'Taming the Wild Rivers' as their history was called.

About this time canoeists I met were talking about the Motu River. I had never heard of it. The easy rivers had been taken and now the planners were after the more remote ones. As with the plan to raise Lake Manapouri, which was the trigger for my generation to question the the accepted wisdom of our leaders, so was the Motu River for canoeists. A loose coalition formed out of canoeists, conservationists, local people, and people who simply loved the wild parts of New

Zealand, and in 1981 the outcome was the first National Water Conservation Order on a New Zealand river.


Canoeists started turning up at hearings and discovered that fishing and hunting people, trampers, jet boaters, conservationists, and iwi were there too. I am delighted that today we are launching Living Rivers. It is something to be proud of that a whole bunch of organisations can agree on one simple thing – that our remaining natural flowing rivers are our heritage and they are worthy of the best care and protection we can give them.

At a court hearing on one river I answered a lawyer's question by reeling off the names of a series of rapids on the river in question.





The judge interrupted. "Do you mean to say the rapids have names?"

"Even some of the individual rocks have names, your honour", I replied.

I hope this gives you, as it certainly did the judge, an idea of canoeists' relationship with the rivers we visit time and time again.



**Attention Kayak Club Members**  
this is the ideal "safe start" to kayaking for 2004

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>River Safety</b>   | Regular Price \$285 Club Price \$245 including NZRCA subsidy \$200                    |
| A two-day course designed to teach you the skills necessary to assist someone while you are still in your boat. Along with some basic rope skills this course is all about being safe on the river. Some of the techniques you will learn include:  |   |
|   |  |
| Components of an efficient Rescue<br>Rescue Organisation<br>Boat based rescues, Deck carries<br>"All in" rescues<br>Strong swimmer rescues<br>Swimming on to strainers<br>Combat swimming with victim, boat and paddle<br>River crossing Techniques<br>Simple boat retrieval methods  |   |
| <b>River Rescue</b>   | Regular Price \$295 Club Price \$255 including NZRCA subsidy \$165                    |
| Run over two days this course is designed for those people who are leading kayaking trips and or those who would like to paddle more adventurous rivers. This course covers:  |   |
|   |  |
| Knots, Pulley systems, Z-drags<br>Improvised harnesses<br>Improvised Abseiling on River Rescue gear<br>Pre Protection of rapids<br>Rescues from Holes with boat and throwbags<br>Vertical Pins and Vertical Horals<br>(Please note the River Safety course is a prerequisite for attending this course)   |   |
| Courses are run on a regular basis. View the course calendar at <a href="http://www.rapids.co.nz">www.rapids.co.nz</a><br>For groups of 6 or more we will run the course at any time to suit your needs.  |   |
| These courses are subsidised by NZRCA with money received from Water Safety NZ. Individuals and club members attending approved River Safety or River Rescue courses can apply for the subsidy on completion of the course. The subsidy is on a per head basis \$45 for River Safety and \$60 for River Rescue. Funding is on a first come, first served basis. |   |
| <b>Bookings Essential 0800 35 34 35</b> <a href="mailto:info@rapids.co.nz">info@rapids.co.nz</a><br><a href="http://www.rapids.co.nz">www.rapids.co.nz</a>  |   |

Maori have a unique relationship with the rivers of this land. *Te waka, te maunga, te awa, te marae, te iwi* – defines a Maori. Rivers like the Whanganui and the Mohaka and the Waikato are an inseparable part of the identity of the tangata whenua.

In the time I have been paddling I have watched with great sadness the loss of a number of rivers and many rapids – and, yes, they all had names. The Whanganui has literally dozens of rapids that were named by Maori, and one of the greatest rapids on Earth called “*Wakarere*” – flying canoe, was on the Waikato. It’s now under many metres of weed infested lake not too far upstream from here. Down South when I drive through Cromwell I don’t see a lake but the lost treasures of the mighty rapids that lie lost forever under 60 metres of water.

There is greater realisation now that rivers are finite and are valuable just for being – rivers. I like to think that rivers are no longer taken for granted and they are not just conveyor belts for waste. When I went to school in Hamilton many years ago the graffiti in the toilets by the Hamilton Rowing Club used to say,

*‘Flush twice. Huntly needs the water.’*

Twenty years ago visiting paddlers were absolutely stunned to see us drink out of the river we were paddling on. Sadly there are few rivers that we can safely drink from today. Some rivers are even unfit to swim in, and canoeing is a sport in which swimming is always a distinct possibility. Regional councils still are unaware of the extent of recreation on and in our rivers. Try and get anyone to remove a car wreck from a river and a ‘hazard to recreation’ does not even enter the consciousness. So called river protection works are routinely constructed without thought of the dangers to navigation, not just for paddlers but also for jet boaters and kids on inner tubes. There is a general lack of respect for rivers that can cost us in unforeseen ways. Pollution, inappropriate forestry, dams, diversions and poorly conceived river protection works all come back and bite us in the form of floods and loss of recreational amenity.

Other countries blessed with great rivers have moved not only to protect their heritage by protecting some of their rivers from exploitation, but also to honour and respect them. Canada has its Canadian Heritage River System, a public trust with representation by federal, provincial and local government and private citizens. Ask any Canadian about their national heritage and they will mention the voyageurs in their canoes travelling across Canada establishing trade, and the sheer wilderness qualities of their river systems. When this country was covered in forest the only way you could travel was by waka. Where’s our heritage?

I’d like to read you a quote.

*“In a country where nature has been so lavish and where we have been so spendthrift of indigenous beauty, to set aside a few rivers in their natural state, should be considered an obligation.”*

This was an American senator Frank Church in 1968. Where does New Zealand stand in 2004?

The US National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was passed in 1968 and it has protected many rivers since. Perhaps the most important contribution this legislation has had is to bestow the name Wild and Scenic River and to note this on maps, sign posts, and generally to give these river corridors equal status with national parks.

Even the current US administration, which is not known for its environmental friendliness, is discovering that communities all over America are standing up for their Wild and Scenic Rivers. These rivers are valued by their communities and that ultimately gives better protection than all the legislation.

Why should we volunteers spend 16 years preparing submissions and attending three tribunal hearings to finally get the Buller River protected by a National Water Conservation Order, only to have to have it challenged only two years later by a developer?

National Water Conservation Orders should mean something to all of us, and they should be sacrosanct. We need to give our rivers the respect and the status they deserve.



## Protecting the Gowan and the Buller Water Conservation Order

A last word about progress fighting the creation of a canal for a power scheme on the Gowan. It is not paddled as often as some of the other tributaries of the Buller, but the Gowan is nevertheless very important. Why? Well read Hugh's speech if you have not already! The Gowan is the thin end of the wedge, if we cannot preserve the Buller Water Conservation Order then it does not bode well for the Motu, Kawarau, Shotover, Rangitata or Mohaka either, all of which are protected by Water Conservation Orders.

The status at the moment is that the Special Tribunal considering Majac Trust's power scheme application has ruled that it will consider values in respect of the Gowan not considered in the original WCO, including kayaking (and fishing), instead of just considering the rafting amenity (as Majac argued that it should). Majac have appealed that decision to the high court. Fish and Game are naturally disappointed, as would be most of the 130 submitters in opposition to the proposal to amend the Water Conservation Order. Fish and Game, as the original applicant to the WCO are bound to appear. NZRCA will join the High Court proceedings in support of Fish and Game.

The Tribunal has also ruled however that it does not have jurisdiction to consider catchment-wide issues, or the addition of extra rivers such as the Matiri. This is very unfortunate as we have just heard Tasman District Council have been sent draft applications relating to 1-2 metre high weirs at the outlet of Lake Matiri as part of a proposed hydro scheme.



*Living Rivers  
protest at Bullerfest,  
March 2005.*

*Photo courtesy of  
the Nelson Mail*



### Individual Membership Form

New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association

PO Box 284 Wellington  
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