

### Reprieve for the Gowan!

Earlier this month, the Environment Court ruled that it would be inappropriate to amend the Buller Water Conservation Order, effectively declining Majac Trust's application for a WCO variation to allow hydro-development on the Gowan River, one of the Buller's major tributaries. Fundamentally, orders like these recognise outstanding characteristics such as recreational values and ensure any activity that threatens those characteristics can be strictly regulated and scrutinised. Successfully protecting the integrity of the Buller Water Conservation Order was imperative to ensure that existing Water Conservation Orders (e.g. Kawarau, Rangitata, Motu, Mohaka) and future ones (Hurunui River, see page 3) are not weakened.

The inherent risks that come with paddling difficult whitewater was tragically demonstrated by two recent kayaking fatalities on the Kaituna and Waikaia River. Both incidents involved strainers, emphasising the danger that trees and the like pose to kayakers. Take care out there! Earlier this year, the NZRCA Education Officer Matt Barker organised a safety and rescue seminar in Murchison, to discuss current river rescue practice with NZOIA Kayak 2 award holders. The NZRCA safety and rescue course syllabi were also evaluated and suggestions were made for improvements. These revamped syllabi are now available for your next boating season! Go check it out at rivers.org.nz/article/river-safety-courses.

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This year the long overdue Canoeist of the Year Award did not go to one, but two well-deserving individuals. The contribution of Maree Baker and Gordon Rayner to kayaking and preservation of rivers, promoting enthusiasm while giving endless time to grow the sport and supporting others into it, was well presented in several submissions. As Craig Adams puts it "Muzz, what do you say, rumour has it she has actually been canoeing! Until recent times she has been the lynchpin of the legal side of the NZRCA. Talented, clever and sharp as a tack - without her dedication to the environment that we all love to play in, our rivers would be even more developed, dammed or sucked dry. Rangitata, Buller... you know the story."

Gordon should also be known to you all for his long time involvement in kayaking in New Zealand. His first descent of Nevis Bluff along with Greg Bell in the 1980's is the stuff legends are made of.

Tony Lepper adds "What may not be so well known is his ongoing involvement in resource management issues like the conservation order on the Kawarau River and more recently his extensive work on the Contact Energy water right renewals. All that work has now come to fruition in an amazing agreement with Contact Energy which will give us a state-of-the-art whitewater facility on the Hawea River."

Have a good one out there, Guido



When it all turns to custard - make the difference with a river rescue course!

## 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!

All map references are to NZMS Infomap 260 Topographical series.

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

Please send items to: The Editor PO Box 284 Wellington editor@rivers.org.nz

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as elected at the NZRCA AGM April 2007

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### Rescue Course Subsidy Guidelines

The NZRCA offers a safety subsidy to its affiliated members through Water Safety NZ. This subsidy reimburses 50% (up to \$100) of the cost of a River Rescue or River Safety course done with an approved provider (either on your own or in an organised group).

Please take note of these new guidelines which must be followed to get reimbursement. Before the intended course date the individual or group organiser must email <a href="mailto:education@rivers.org.nz">education@rivers.org.nz</a> and advise the name of the provider / instructor, course dates and the amount of subsidy which will be required. The NZRCA will pre-approve the subsidy provided funds are available, and will confirm this by email. The reimbursement will be made on completion of the course, once the NZRCA receives the subsidy claim form (print this from <a href="mailto:rivers.org.nz">rivers.org.nz</a>) and the course receipt from your course instructor. If your subsidy is not pre-approved you may not be subsidised.

So take control! Organise a group, find an instructor (look under Safety, then Safety course on rivers.org.nz), email education@rivers.org.nz to get pre-approval, enjoy your course, fill in your claim for reimbursement and send it to us.

## Protecting the Hurunui from dam-nation

Story by Tony Ward-Holmes - Photos by Per-Olov Brantberg and Hugh Canard

On August 30th, Fish & Game and the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association lodged an application for a Water Conservation Order with the Environment Minister, seeking preservation of the natural condition of the Upper Hurunui River and its surrounding lakes, which are presently still unaffected by dams or water takes. The Environment Court's ruling to decline a variation to the Buller Water Conservation Order earlier this month shows the undeniable importance of these orders to help protect waterways with significant biodiversity and outstanding recreational values.

The Upper Hurunui River is the most popular river in Canterbury and one of the most kayaked in the country, containing a mix of tight rocky gorges, with open boulder gardens in between. This makes it an ideal teaching river with many spots suitable for beginners or advanced paddlers to hone their skills, e.g. on slalom camps, safety and rescue courses. It receives year-round use by local clubs such as the Whitewater Canoe Club and the University of Canterbury Canoe Club, visiting canoe clubs from Auckland down to Otago, polytechnics and schools, slalom competitions, kayak shop courses, and numerous unaffiliated paddlers.

The New Zealand Whitewater guide also praises the Hurunui: "Flowing through an isolated sub alpine valley, much of the attraction of the Hurunui lies in its easy, yet enjoyable rapids with excellent eddies for teaching. It's Canterbury's most used beginner river, the first whitewater trip for countless neophyte Canterbury paddlers, site of many slaloms and training sessions, and a good hang out to escape the city scene."

The NZRCA river use survey conducted in 1991 showed that the Hurunui River was the fifth most paddled river in New Zealand after the Buller, Waikato, Manawatu, and Tongariro Rivers. Maori Gully was the sixth most paddled grade 3 section; and Top Gorge/Joliebrook the fourth most paddled grade 2 section. Since the date of that survey, usage of the Hurunui River is likely to have increased significantly.

The variety of paddling, easy access at several points along the river, and proximity to Christchurch allows several different trips to be run within a day. Very few other rivers in New Zealand offer the kind of experience that the Hurunui River does and none that do are within reasonable day-trip reach of a major population centre.

"The WCO is a valuable tool for ensuring the protection of exceptional waterways", said Bryce Johnson, Chief Executive of Fish & Game New Zealand, "and gives the protected waterway similar status to a national park." The wide support given to this application underlines the value accorded to the Upper Hurunui by the New Zealand community.

Fish & Game North Canterbury Environment Officer, Jason Holland said "We believe a Water Conservation Order for the Hurunui River and lakes is both appropriate and very necessary to protect this environment for future generations."

## Newssplashes

### Didymo cleaning protocol for the Rangitata

Just so you know - Didymo hasn't magically left the building! It's still out there waiting to hitch a ride with any unsuspecting paddler to the next clean waterway. Didymo has now been confirmed in 44 rivers and five lakes in the South Island and recent incursions include the Rangitata River and the lower Matakitaki, just upstream of the earthquake run. So far it is not known to have spread to the North Island yet. We encourage paddlers to check, clean and dry between all rivers in New Zealand, regardless of whether they are known to be infected or not. If you're unsure of the procedure to follow, check our website - rivers.org.nz/article/Didymo.

On behalf of a committee formed by the Peel Forest Enhancement Group, Rangitata Gorge Landcare Group, Lake Clearwater Hutholders Association and the Orari River Protection Group kayakers are requested to participate in a didymo cleaning protocol based on treating the Rangitata Gorge and Middle Rangitata as separate waterways. Although didymo has been found at Clarke's Flat, the Arundel Bridge and at the mouth of the Rangitata we have every confidence that we can stop the spread up the river, with your help. By treating the Rangitata from just below the RDR intake as an infected river and from above the intake as clear further crosscontamination can be prevented.

The kayaking fraternity are affected by this as it is the take-out for the gorge run and the put-in for the lower end. All we ask is that you clean all gear, clothing, etc with the appropriate cleaning materials before putting in to run either section. Particularly if you decide to run the lower end, please do not re-enter the gorge section again without thoroughly cleaning your gear, clothing and footwear. The Peel Forest Enhancement Group will be setting up cleaning stations on both sides of the river, one in Peel Forest and one near Lake Clearwater. - Raevyn Larcombe

### Release Schedule

### Mangahao Gorge

Mangahao Release Sat 27 October 10:00 - 16:00

### Wairoa River - McLaren Falls to Powerstation

Wairoa Release	Sun	07 October	10:00 - 16:00
Wairoa Release	Sun	21 October	10:00 - 16:00
Wairoa Release	Sun	04 November	10:00 - 16:00
Wairoa Release	Sun	18 November	10:00 - 16:00
Wairoa Release	Sun	02 December	10:00 - 16:00

### BlissFest 2007

 Big Air Comp.
 Sat
 06 October
 10:00 - 16:00

 Surf Comp.
 Sun
 07 October
 10:00 - 16:00

Please refer to our website (<u>rivers.org.nz/events/</u>) for the latest release schedules, including flow information.

### Wairehu Playhole - Mike Birch

Following construction of the Wairehu Playhole during March and April earlier this year, acceptance testing was undertaken by two expert kayakers while representatives from Genesis Energy, NZRCA and OPC (Outdoor Pursuits Centre) were present. The play hole on the Wairehu Canal was designed by Genesis Energy's engineers and modelled to be a single wave/hole feature 'working' in the 8 to 15 cumec range.

Unfortunately the playhole did not perform as expected and will remain closed to the public until further notice. This was very disappointing to all parties involved in the project, especially considering the incredible amount of effort that has gone into making this professional kayaking facility possible.

The Wairehu Playhole is part of a compensation package negotiated by OPC and NZRCA with Genesis for lost whitewater amenity values caused by the Tongariro Power Scheme in the Central Plateau. The Tongariro and Whakapapa releases are part of the same compensation package. These releases are well-attended and have been taking place since 2005.



## Newssplashes

However, the playhole part of the bargain did not come along that easily, mostly due to funding shortfalls which arose from unforeseen engineering difficulties.

The NZRCA managed to recruit help from the NZ Community Trust. An agreement was reached with Genesis to forego some Access 10 releases in winter when attendance was sparse, in return for the bulk of the shortfall - keeping in mind that Access 10 could be run year-round at a lower flow.

The only alternative was not to forego any releases, in which case the playhole could not be built and Genesis Energy would have provided a monetary sum of \$90,000 to OPC for a particular project, which would create a recreational resource of benefit to the wider public (not necessarily a kayaking resource).

Presently, the playhole design is being reviewed for improvements and it is hoped that remedial engineering work can be undertaken this summer. Unfortunately, site modifications can only take place when the Wairehu Canal is dry i.e. during periods of dry weather, usually late summer. In the meantime the site remains closed to the public.

### Kayak Instruction with Digital Cameras

Video feedback has been used as an instructional aid for more than a decade. In the early 90's this often involved big land-based video cameras and televisions which ran off car batteries. This set-up was cumbersome and only used as part of professional instruction programmes. Since then times have moved on.

Nowadays, modern digital cameras are as small as a cell phone and waterproof, making them a perfect tool for kayak instruction. Most cameras can hold six minutes of video footage and files can be deleted if more space is needed.

The video function on a digital camera enables instant feedback on flat water, in the river and even underwater during a roll. Footage can be displayed frame by frame and even includes sound. This helps analyse faults when reviewing video footage with the learner kayaker. It can also show role model strokes and rolls to emphasise good kayaking techniques.

I have only been using my camera for a month and have found it a simple but very effective teaching aid. - *Steve Garside* 





In Canterbury, huge water takes are being demanded from the Waimakariri and Hurunui Rivers for irrigating areas of up to 60,000 ha in each case. Impacts will arise from reducing the summer flows of these rivers, from the proposed storage impoundments, and from the nutrient-enriched waters that will drain from the irrigated areas.

Canterbury has already experienced much deterioration in the quality of its lowland streams. Streams recorded as being in poor or very poor ecological health rose from 50 percent in 1999 to 75 percent in 2003. Some are running dry for prolonged periods because of irrigation takes.

The impact of land use intensification can also be seen in Waikato. There, regulation of point source discharges (e.g., factories, sewage outfalls, dairy sheds) has gradually improved some aspects of water quality – BOD, ammonia and arsenic for example – but despite that, the growing contamination from non-point sources (i.e., farm paddocks) has made it impossible to restore most streams to an acceptable condition.

Environment Waikato's monitoring samples in lowland Waikato tributary streams show that 62 percent are unsuitable for swimming because of excessive turbidity and/or elevated bacterial contamination, while 42 percent fail to meet standards for ecological health.

A dangerous cocktail of microbial pathogens, including cryptosporidium, infests the turgid lower Waikato River. Upstream, where the water remains clearer, nutrient levels are rising, and algal blooms are becoming more frequent.

A key driver of this deterioration is the 600 percent increase in the use of nitrogen fertilizer in the catchment over the last 13 years. This has allowed stocking rates to increase. Evidence shows that stream water quality is closely associated with stocking rates on the adjoining land.

Over the last few years, the economy has been buoyed by the proceeds of agriculture, and of dairying in particular. But as a nation, we are hooked on a means of earning a living that seems to be fast approaching its environmental limits.

In most regions, the dairy industry was unable to prevent the extensive environmental damage caused by its recent doubling of cow numbers. That hasn't stopped them pushing for another doubling in cow numbers, for which they are relying on a massive expansion of irrigation. But how many more doublings of cow numbers can New Zealand stand?

Sooner or later, we will have to get off the agricultural commodity treadmill, and start earning our living from the "knowledge economy" sectors that generate the prosperity of other developed countries. A small country like Denmark, with 5 million people and a dairy industry about the same size as ours, is instructive in this regard.

### Lessons from Denmark

Over recent decades, Denmark has weaned itself off a dependence on agricultural expansion. Today, its economic growth comes from exports of sophisticated machinery, instruments, medicinal and pharmaceutical products. Agriculture accounted for only 16 percent of its exports last year.

New Zealand has to go through the same economic transition, but we must not wait until our environment is sacrificed to agricultural development to the same degree that the Danish people sacrificed theirs.

By the mid-1980s, eutrophication was rife in Danish lakes, estuaries, fiords and shallow coastal waters. Algal blooms became common; swimming became restricted; algae mats and dead fish were washing up on beaches to rot in the summer sun. The country finally woke up and took strong



Above photo: Gisborne (Pakowhai catchment) - Massive soil losses from the hill country regularly degrade our streams. These losses are preventable if sustainable land management practices are enforced.

action when inshore fishermen found themselves trawling up tonnes of dead and rotting crayfish, a Danish delicacy, from their traditional fishing grounds. Intensive controls on farming practices were first adopted in 1986, and then progressively tightened. Outflows of nutrients from farming have now been substantially reduced. But it has taken Denmark twenty years of intensive effort to partially repair the damage which agriculture did to the quality of its water resources.

Even today, only 30 percent of Danish lakes and 44 percent of rivers and streams meet the water quality objectives specified in their regional plans. Because of the persistence of eutrophication, the abundance of crustaceans like crayfish in Danish coastal waters is still at only half their 1980 level. The restoration of the Danish environment has required tough policies. Every year, every dairy farm submits its farm plan for approval to the Danish Forest and Nature Agency

– the equivalent of DOC. Strict limits apply to stock numbers and fertilizer use, while stream margins and biodiversity remnants must be protected.

The question for New Zealand is clear enough: are we going to halt the extremes of land use intensification before, or after, we make the mistakes which Denmark made? Already the warning signs are obvious, in so many of our lakes and rivers. But as with the energy issue, we must lift this debate above local arguments over the fate of individual rivers, and move it to a new, strategic, national level. New Zealanders must debate and agree on a new, constructive vision: one of placing our agriculture, and our energy production, on to a wholly sustainable basis, in a genuinely long term context. This is all about defining what kind of country we want New Zealand to become. It's about

seizing control of our development path, as the Danes did, and going in a new direction. If we succeed in this, then the absurdity of progressively squandering more and more of our environmental inheritance in a series of short term decisions will finally become part of this country's common sense.

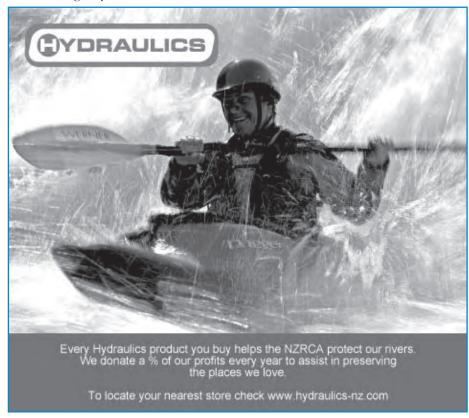
### Strategies for sustainable energy

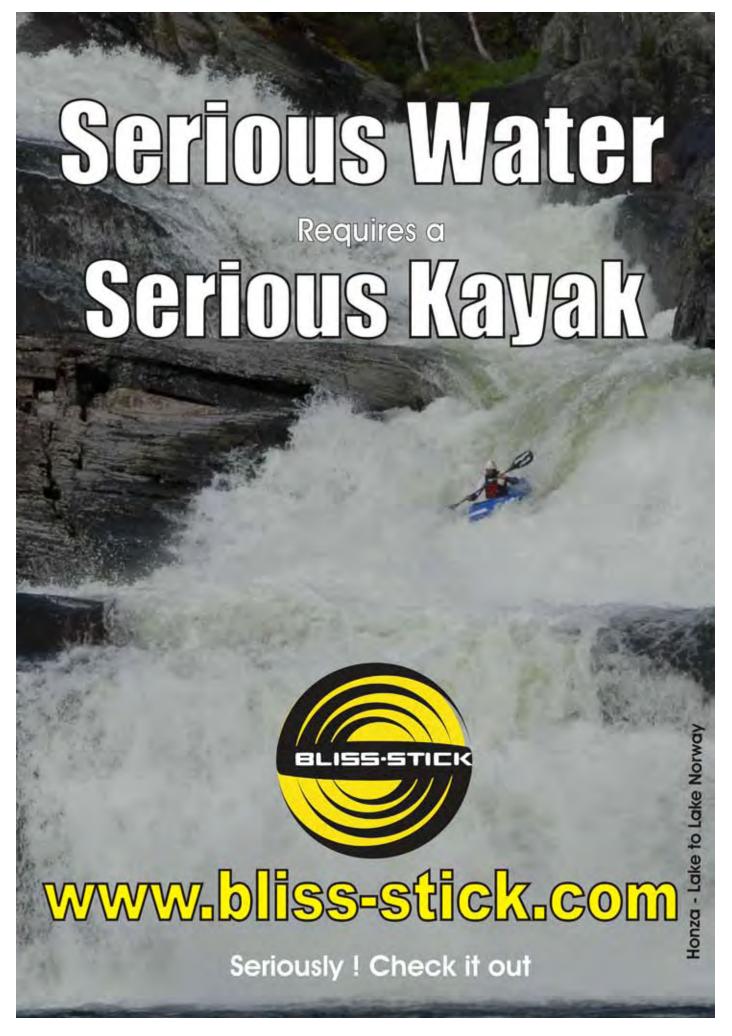
One thing has now been widely agreed: that the threat of climate change is real, and action must be taken to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases. For river defenders, that is both a threat and an opportunity. The threat is that the climate issue will just become another short-term excuse to grab the remaining unexploited rivers for

hydro development. The opportunity is that this whole issue is so big, it could finally break our collective habits of short-term thinking. In New Zealand's search for a sustainable energy future there are four main strategies available. Each can help to spare our remaining unspoiled rivers:

- Waste less energy, by investing in energy efficiency;
- Foster a less energy-intensive economy;
- Develop and apply new renewable technologies (solar, tidal, etc);
- Continue to use fossil fuels a bit longer, but sequester the associated carbon out of the atmosphere, either by placing it deep underground (eg in the Maui gasfield) or by storing it in permanent forests.

New Zealand will almost certainly end up using a mix of all four strategies. Almost inevitably, this will require higher energy prices than we have today. - *Continued in the next newsletter*.







Firstly I want to thank all of the people who rescued me Barry, Sue, Louis, Ellie, Stu, Diego, Yan, Ciccio, Colin
and Pete - without their help I would certainly have drowned.
The actions of Louis and Pete (both of whom I only met at the putin) were critical to my rescue and without question courageous - they
risked their own safety getting out to me and I am very grateful to them.

It's the third day after the event and I don't particularly like writing this because it brings back the vivid memory of being close to losing my life - it was a very bad pin situation. However I think it is important to do so because there are lessons in every incident that may help others and hindsight observations can be helpful. Hopefully, it may also be somewhat cathartic. It happened like this...

Eleven of us flew into Barrowman Flat on the Whataroa tagging on the back of a helicopter raft shuttle. A lot of us were only recent acquaintances having only met the day before, or at the put in. We checked who had what safety gear before flying. We had throw ropes, wood saws, split paddles, first aid kits, slings and prussic loops. The incident happened on the first class III rapid downstream of the put in, at around noon.

I approached the rapid at the back of the group and being new to the river and not being able to see clearly what was involved I was about to get out and inspect it. Diego shouted to me not to bother as it was easy down the right. I took his advice and set off expecting easy water and was too relaxed. The line I chose e involved a bit of an S-bend move. I looked to surf across a fold in the first chute and underestimated the downstream speed of the water which swept me onto a boulder and then backwards off this, then towards another boulder that had a short log pointing upstream just at water level. I could see it coming before I hit, and I knew what was going to happen. I instinctively leaned onto the boulder and the log entered my cockpit. Fortunately I could reach the boulder and a rock under the water to support myself. The log was across my



thigh and I knew I was in a serious situation. I tried to push myself off but the force of the water was too great. Yan had seen it happen and yelled to the others to come and assist.

I knew from my safety training (thanks to NZRCA, WWCC, NZ Kayak School and Linda Wensley) that I had to keep my situation stable until others could come to the rescue. I thought from the forces on me that I could only get out with someone on the rock downstream of me and shouted this out to Barry who was by now out of his boat and on the bank. I was wondering how they were going to do this and thinking the order of safety is "yourself, the group and victim last"!

After some attempts to throw me a sling Pete jumped across to me and was able to stand in the water between me and the boulder and support me. It was a brave action on his part. Louis shortly followed him and it was great to have them both there alongside me. They clipped lines to my life jacket and the stern of the boat. Then the team tried pulling

the boat upstream and me out but to no avail, even though they were using a vector pull on a fixed line.

I was now in a position where the log was across my knee and when the weight was taken off the line to the stern, my knee was being bent backwards and very painful. I had thoughts my leg might break. When they pulled me, my head was almost under water and I could now no longer support myself. I could also now feel another smaller stick over my left ankle that could trap my

and time was going by. I could see that the only way out was to be cut out. I told Pete this and when he looked hesitant, I just remember saying repeatedly "just cut the #!@\*\*%# boat"! With support I was able to get my saw out of my lifejacket and Pete started cutting - the blade broke!!

Luckily Louis also had a saw, albeit a rusty one, and took over as Pete was getting cold - the Whataroa is glacier-fed. The cutting eventually gave me enough room to squeeze out with the rescue teams help - "thank God"!



Barry was directing operations from the rock just upstream and hauled me onto it and told me to just stay there and rest. My right leg had been highly stressed in the extraction and could not support my weight. I was thrown another rope and I clipped my towline to the fixed line and was "zipped" to the shore. I am guessing but I would say the rescue had taken 20 or 30 (?) minutes to that point. The rescue team then spent some more time (15 minutes?) getting the boat off the log.

My head was not in a good space thinking how close I had been to dying and I was shivering with cold. Some kind words and some supportive hugs from Ellie helped - I must have looked a bit fragile. With a little rest, my right leg improved and I found I could walk okay. Suggestions were made to get a helicopter in to fly me out, but I thought my leg had improved enough to walk out and there was a track alongside the river. Although the walk out would take me nearly five hours, I didn't fancy sitting waiting on the side of the river and reliving the situation.

The guys stripped my now cut and useless boat of its gear and left it up on the right bank just downstream of the rapid. After I took two anti-inflammatory pills and a pain killer, we set off downstream, me walking and the rest of the party paddling and to hopefully enjoy the rest of their day without further incident.



# Lessons in Hindsight

Don't take any West Coast rapid lightly; the Whataroa is a big volume river and was moving faster and more forcefully than the rivers I had recently paddled, even though at medium level. It is silt laden and obstacles under the water are hidden. Make your own decisions, don't listen to others directions about a new rapid even if it is only class III - I wish I had got out like I had planned, made my own assessment and decided on my own line. That I did not is my fault.

**Stabilise** the situation. I had it in my head from a recent incident on the Otira and a river rescue course run by Linda Wensley just how important this is. This was my first thought and was fortunate to be able to "stop the door slamming" until the rescue could be organised.

**Getting** a person alongside the victim makes a huge difference to the assessment of the situation and the rescue. It may not always be possible to do so without undue risk to the rescuers. I was fortunate this was possible in my case, and Pete and Louis were prepared to take the personal risk involved, for my sake.

Realise that attempts to pull the "patient" out in a direction parallel to the water can submerge them and if they are still trapped, drown them. In my case Pete and Louis on the rock with me were able to prevent this from happening.

**Paddle** a creek boat with lots of attachment points on the deck. My Micro 240 only had bow and stern attachment points and this limited the rescue teams pulling options. My new El Jefe has 5 strong attachment points with lots of clearance to make clipping easier and faster in a difficult situation.

**Wood** saws are an essential part of a kayaker's personal rescue kit - without a saw to cut my boat I would not have got out alive. A knife would not have done the job. A reasonable saw only costs around \$30 at Mitre 10.

**Rope** skills are important skills and were vital in my rescue. A lot of what I learnt on Linda's river rescue course (including vector pulls and zip lines) was employed by the team. A big team with plenty of appropriate rescue gear makes a big difference.

My sincere thanks again to everyone in the team for successfully effecting a difficult rescue and saving me. Please be assured that none of my suggested "lessons in hindsight" are intended to be criticisms - you all did a fantastic job - I am very thankfully still here to prove it!

## 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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### Individual Membership Form

New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association PO Box 284 Wellington E-mail: nzrca@rivers.org.nz Website: www.rivers.org.nz

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Ph (day)	Ph (a/h)
Address	
E-mail	
Fax	
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Club	

Your membership details are managed by the NZRCA in accordance with the Incorporated Societies Act (1908) and the Privacy Act (1993).

### **Individual Membership**

30.00

Includes three issues of NZ Canoeing and a Water Safety Subsidy of 50%, upto \$100 per person per year for River Safety or Rescue Courses.

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Donation \$ .00

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

Total \$ .00

Tick to receive a receipt

Make cheques out to "NZRCA" and send to PO Box 284 Wellington. Welcome!

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