



New Zealand Canoeing 08.2

Spring Issue 2008

The

Black Issue



Awesome Gorge, Kaituna. It's on The Hit List.

"Why the Black Issue"? you may ask.

NZ rivers are under threat as never before, now is the time to highlight that NZ Whitewater 125 Great Runs could soon be 75 Great Runs. Read on inside for the low-down, and what you can do about it to help.

Kayaking needs your help!

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 are welcome!
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as elected at the NZRCA AGM April 2008

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Cover photo. Awesome Gorge, Kaituna. courtesy of Andi Uhl

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Newssplashes

International White Water Hall of Fame

July 31, 2008 - Silver Spring , Maryland U.S.A.

The International Whitewater Hall of Fame Board of Governors has announced the Class of 2008 of the International Whitewater Hall of Fame (IWHOF) honorees.

Culminating a nomination process that began in February and involved an electorate of more than 75 internationally-recognized whitewater paddlers this newest class of legends includes a wildwater stalwart, a long-time explorer and designer, and the showman of showmen whose diversity has contributed to both the sport and business of whitewater.

A formal induction ceremony of this class, as well as the 2007 Class of Inductees, will take place Oct. 11, 2008, at the Nantahala Outdoor Center in Bryson City, N.C.



EXPLORER: Mick Hopkinson

A slalom racer from Britain before putting his energy into exploration, Mick, who operates the New Zealand Kayak School, has been on such first descents as the river Inn in Switzerland and Austria, the Blue Nile in Ethiopia, and the Dudh Kosi in Nepal. He was also a member of Nepal's Karnali expedition and the Taming of the Lion first descent team on the Indus River Indus in Baltistan. More recently he has been knocking first descents in Wyoming's Wind River Range and on the West Coast of New Zealand.

Congratulations Mick, on an outstanding award that recognises a lifetime of dedication to kayaking

The NZRCA River Guide
is finally online... Check it out!
rivers.org.nz/nz

Thanks to those involved for getting the online guide up and running. It will be an awesome resource for national and international kayakers.

Releases

Hawkes Bay

Whakamarino and Piripaua release

Sat 08 and Sun 09 Nov 10am – 4pm

Bay of Plenty

Wairoa releases; McLaren Falls

November Sun, 09 Nov 2008 10:00-16:00
Sun, 23 Nov 2008 10:00-16:00

December Sun, 07 Dec 2008 10:00-16:00
Sun, 14 Dec 2008 10:00-16:00
Sun, 21 Dec 2008 10:00-16:00
Sun, 28 Dec 2008 10:00-16:00

National Park

Access 10 from Waikato falls 03 Jan 10am - 4pm

Access 13 and 14. 04 January 10am - 4pm

Check out rivers.org.nz/events for updated information on releases



Mangahao release, Manawatu. Photo: courtesy of Alan Bell

Events

The NZ Freestyle Kayak Series encompasses four events throughout New Zealand over a four month period. The focus of the NZFKS is to provide an opportunity for kayakers to participate in a fun social environment where the emphasis is on giving things a go. Each event includes both fun and semi-competitive events and have included events like pairs ball-racing, downriver freestyle and social rodeos.

Tekapo Throwdown 2008

Sat 01 and Sun, 02 Nov 2008 10:00-16:00

Event 2 of the NZ Freestyle Kayak Series 2008

Xmas @ Kaituna 08

Sat, 20 and Sun 21 Dec 2008 10:00-16:00

Event 3 of the NZ Freestyle Kayak Series 2008

Details at: <http://nzfks.co.nz/>

Further info contact: Antz Longman, cumecmagazine@clear.net.nz

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Honza - Lake to Lake Norway

How Would Your Government Answer?

Rivers are a finite resource but hydro power is often touted as renewable energy.

- Does your party support building more dams?
- What does your party propose if there are no more rivers left to exploit?
- What steps will your party take to preserve rivers such as the Matakītiki, Motu, Mokihinui, Waitaha and Kaituna?
- In what ways will your party uphold Water Conservation Orders that power companies seek to overturn (e.g. Motu)?
- How does your party propose to develop the transmission network to avoid the loss of more rivers to hydro power schemes?
- Which forms of electricity generation does your party actively support, other than hydro?

For answers to these questions and more, check out Fish and Game's "Political Parties Speak" page:
http://www.fishandgame.org.nz/Site/Features/PP_Home.aspx

Murchison Favourite, Matakītiki and Glenroy Under Threat

Network Tasman are investigating a hydro project on the Matakītiki River. They have already bought land for a dam and powerhouse at Mammoth Flat, which is upstream of the Horse Terrace bridge (i.e. the bridge on the way to the Glenroy).

We have been told the lower Matakītiki (i.e. Earthquake) run is not under consideration, however a run-of-river scheme is being considered for the Middle Matakītiki section and they have negotiated an option to purchase land there. This would result in the Middle Matakītiki being essentially de-watered.

The Glenroy is also being assessed for development. Nothing is known yet of the earthquake risks or other local impacts of the scheme and there doesn't seem to have been any consultation with Murchison residents.



The middle Matakītiki section. Photo courtesy of Hugh Canard



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Our Rivers Are Not Renewable

Thank you to Forest & Bird South Island Conservation Manager, Chris Todd to allow us to reprint this article.

Photos: Aerial view of Mokihiniui courtesy of Craig Potton

Kayakers in action courtesy of Robin Rutter Baumann



So-called renewable energy can have a serious impact on the environment. Forest & Bird South Island Conservation Manager Chris Todd says we need to make sure power generation is truly renewable and responsible.

Our wild rivers are threatened by climate change and runaway power consumption. Electricity demand is predicted to keep growing at 1.3% - 2% or an extra 150-200 megawatts of generating capacity every year. That extra demand is equivalent to the generation produced by damming two rivers the size of the Hurunui and the Mohaka every year.

To curb greenhouse gas emissions from coal and oil-fired power stations, the government has boldly committed New Zealand to producing 90% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2025, up from about 70% now. That means mainly hydro, geothermal and wind generation, with other technologies like tide-driven turbines under development.

“Renewable” energy is touted as environmentally preferable to energy

generated by burning fossil fuels, but hydro development involves the destruction of our rivers’ natural and scenic values, ecosystems and recreation. Development of wind farms in inappropriate settings can also have adverse effects on the surrounding environment, landscape and local communities.

If we used hydro-electricity to meet just 40% of predicted electricity demand, we would need to dam or divert the Waitaki, Clutha, Ngaruroro, Wairau, Whanganui, Hurunui, Mohaka, Mokihiniui, Grey, both Waiau Rivers, the Taieri, Rangitaiki, Rangitikei, Waiaou, Raukokore, Waikato, Patea, Waimea, Ruamahanga, Awatere, Wairoa, Manawatu,

Tukituki, Whakatane, Pelorus, Ashburton and Tarawera Rivers. What then? We must not be panicked into destroying our heritage, only to find that we are in exactly the same position in terms of meeting demand for generation in 2025, minus our rivers.

There is no simple answer, but a range of ideas have worked well elsewhere and, used together, could create a much more sustainable future for energy.

It is more cost-effective to invest in reducing electricity demand than to increase electricity generation capacity. This “virtual generation,” sometimes called “negawatt power,” improves electricity supply by improving efficiency, rather than by building new power stations.

A market can be created to trade negawatts: an electricity company with additional demand that it could not meet through existing generation



Mokihinui River



Save our rivers
www.rivers.org.nz



Lost-forever River

could pay its customers to reduce their power use, rather than pay more to develop new generation.

There are thousands of ways to reduce electricity demand, ranging from changing to energy-efficient light bulbs and insulating houses, to converting dairy sheds to use biogas generated from cow effluent.

We need to decentralize and diversify electricity supply to encourage households and communities to set up their own small-scale generation close to where the supply is needed.

If power companies were obliged to buy power back from their consumers, we would see huge private investment in micro-hydro, wind and solar cells. For example, just one wind turbine could power a small community – and any excess power could be sold.

DIDYMO

Cleaning it up at NZRCA Meeting



When we produce more electricity, it needs to be done responsibly, not as a knee-jerk response to perceived threats of black-outs.

Responsible renewable projects would not target the nation's pristine wild and scenic rivers (such as Meridian's current proposal to dam the West Coast's Mokihinui gorge and its large surrounding area of pristine rainforest.) Neither would they target the nation's most beloved landscapes. Forest & Bird is working with the Wind Energy Association to develop industry codes of practice that will guide truly renewable and responsible generation. It is high time our power companies moved in the same direction.

Forrest and Bird have printed 'Save the Mokihinui' stickers to raise awareness of the proposed hydro scheme.

Please use these stickers to help raise awareness, so that you and other kayakers still have the opportunity to paddle this river in years to come.

A Perfect Storm

By Tony Ward-Holmes

Hey there, got 10 minutes? Pour yourself a cuppa.. or maybe better.. grab a cold one, and let me tell you what's going on down at the river.

Hmm, where to start? How about the other side of the planet, then work our way home. In Scotland a recent government report says there are 1,000 viable hydro schemes that should be developed. "We have ambitions to make Scotland the green energy capital of Europe and hydro is a huge part of our diverse renewables potential". These 1,000 schemes would generate.. wait for it.. 3% of Scotland's electricity. I'm not kidding.. Google Scotsman hydro to find the article in "The Scotsman" newspaper. That's 3%, not 30%, for damming every last burn, dribble and dram.. all in the name of renewable energy. Suffice to say you can cross Scotland off your list of favorite Christmas kayaking destinations.



Kakapotahi: On the Hydro hit-list, potentially by 2012

Photo courtesy of Tony Ward-Holmes

Moving right along now, let's drop in on Greece. There are some classic sections there, but not for much longer. 250 new hydro schemes are permitted or being built and 150 more are under application. A group of kayakers are waging a campaign to save 40 of them (Google "save 40 of the best rivers in Greece"). Here in NZ there are 125 classic runs in Graham Charles' guidebook. I'd like to think we can save more than 40 of them, but our work is cut out for us. More about that soon.

Now, let's visit Asia. Home to huge mountains and rivers, incredibly remote wilderness, and also to the world's fastest development. India is in the middle of a programme to add 50,000 MW of hydro schemes by 2012, and is kicking off a new programme to add 34,000 MW more. That adds up to the equivalent 100 new Manapouri schemes. China of course is adding more than anybody, some of which threaten species habitat, ecosystems, food supply and the economies of unfortunate countries downstream.

Next stop, Tasmania. Great place, it feels very much like the top half of the South Island. Except for the rivers... there is only one major free-flowing river left. The long and bitter fight to save the Franklin attracted global attention and created Australia's green movement. Once you've paddled the Franklin and if it doesn't rain, then courtesy of Hydro Tasmania there is no paddling anywhere. To run the World Cup Slalom, paddlers had to pay Hydro Tasmania \$30,000 a day for releases down the natural riverbed of Cataract Gorge. It doesn't stop there. Hydro Tasmania has just been contracted by Network Tasman to investigate the Matakita and Glenroy.

Which brings us home to New Zealand. Clean, green, 100% PURE, and if you're a kayaker... going down the gurgler. All species live or die by the quality and quantity of their habitat, and kayaker's habitat is New Zealand's rivers. This habitat is under immense threat from development, and there is no national debate on where the balance between development and lifestyle should lie.

Since Project Aqua was cancelled, NZRCA has noticed rapidly increasing pressure to dam a host of smaller and more pristine rivers for hydro power. NZ's economic hydro potential is already 80% developed according to the New Zealand Energy Strategy. Much of the last 20% is all the small projects that nobody ever bothered with before. It's also all much of NZ's whitewater recreational amenity - the habitat for kayakers.

Many factors are conspiring to ratchet up the pressure. Continuing growth in electricity demand, due to growth in both population and consumption, has resulted in demand outstripping secure supply. This growth is by definition unsustainable as it cannot be supplied without negatively impacting future generations. The proposed Kaituna scheme



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But wait... there's more!

Kayaker's whitewater habitat is not only threatened, so is access to the

habitat. An imminent change to the Mt Aspiring National Park Management Plan proposes to eliminate the helicopter landing site at Bonar flats on the Waiatoto River. Kayakers have used the site for years for this classic multi-day kayak trip. NZRCA's position is simple:

- Kayakers are the #1 and probably only user group in the middle Waiatoto valley.
- DOC Haast say they do not know of any parties that have walked up into the middle reaches this century. So there is very little likelihood of conflict with other user groups, by our use of aerial access.
- We have been told that 10,000 deer were flown out of the backcountry by Haast helicopter operators in the last year. These won't all be from within MANP, nevertheless many of them will be and the increased aerial traffic by kayakers on top of these operations is insignificant.
- Park Management Plans are there to manage conservation and usage issues. We are the sole user group, and we impact no others. Therefore we struggle to understand why it is proposed that the Bonar Flats site be removed.

DOC's reply was that the change was necessary to provide a buffer for the Olivines Wilderness Area. The Olivines plateau, at the heart of the Olivines Wilderness Area, is 40km (probably a week's tramp for most people) distant from Bonar Flats. Between the Bonar Flats landing site and various points on the Olivines Range and plateau are:

- areas outside of MANP
- privately owned musterer's huts
- grazed land
- huts within MANP
- the landing site at Bevan Col for mountaineers wanting to attempt Aspiring.

It is difficult to see why the Bonar Flats site is being singled out given the lack of impact on any other users, the other more immediate incursions near the Olivines Wilderness Area, and the fact that many other parts of the wilderness area border are not buffered by no-fly zones. The wilderness area has an arm wrapping

around the heavily trafficked Mt Aspiring and extending north to the top of Bonar Flat. Had the sole user group in this area been consulted with, the obvious boundary would have been at the Pearson confluence, only 3km south but upstream of

the best whitewater on the Waiatoto. However kayakers were not consulted when the wilderness area boundaries were determined, nor did any Government agency seek to ensure access to the recreational amenity.

The draft of the new Mt Aspiring National Park Management Plan is due to be published within weeks, at which time DOC will invite submissions. The situation with the Waiatoto is unfortunately symptomatic of access issues on the DOC Estate. In the draft DOC Conservation General Policy and National Park General Policy, vehicle use throughout the conservation estate was to be "Actively Discouraged". Kayaks were classed as "vehicles". It took a sustained campaign by the Mountain Bike Association, NZRCA and other advocacy groups to have this vehicle policy modified. At no point were Government agencies responsible for recreation (e.g. Ministry of Sport, or SPARC) active in protecting the recreational amenity. Aerial access is still under major threat due to these policies. Access

What can you do about it?

1. **Think about what you enjoy today and what your children will not ever see.**
2. **Support NZRCA by joining a club or joining directly. Only about 10-20% of kayakers currently belong to NZRCA, yet everyone benefits... from releases, water conservation orders, the rivers.org.nz website, safety courses, legislation (ie the legislation you don't have to put up with!) and much more.**
3. **Get involved in your club's conservation activities. If your club isn't active, make it so.**
4. **Get into discussions with your friends and work colleagues. This will test your understanding of the issues and make you a better person.**
5. **Write Letters to the Editor, hassle your Council and MPs.**
6. **Keep an eye on your patch. Get involved.. submit on local schemes and help NZRCA to. Let everyone know whats happening via the Conservation and Access forums on rivers.org.nz.**
7. **Make use of releases, many paddlers have fought long and hard for them. Get out there and paddle!**



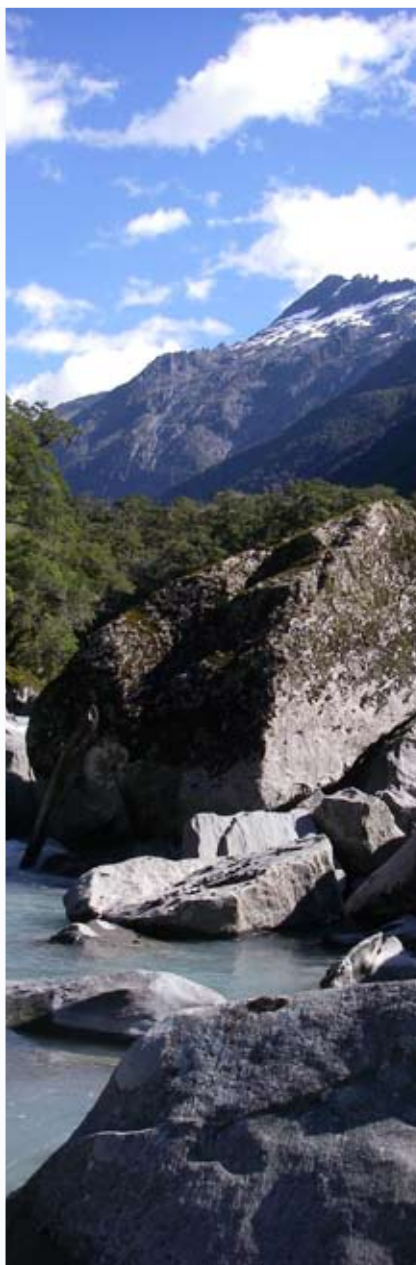
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to many wilderness rivers can only be achieved via air. In particular, most multi-day wilderness rivers can only be accessed via air. The South Island has five multi-day whitewater runs (i.e. of more than grade 2; the Clarence is a unique 5 day grade 2 trip river suitable for beginner/intermediates), all total classics. These rivers are the kayaking equivalent of DOC's "Great Walks". From top to bottom these are the Karamea, the Upper Waiau, the Landsborough, the Waiatoto, and the Waipara. All have access issues.

The Karamea is South Island's only 4-day whitewater run. It is cut in half by the Tasman Wilderness Area. NZRCA amongst other organisations had to fight for the retention of the Roaring Lion Hut, which provides shelter for kayakers wishing to attempt this demanding trip without having to carry the extra weight of a tent. In this we succeeded, however the wilderness area that was eventually gazetted does still eliminate the best 1-day option.

The Upper Waiau is on St James Station, which has just been bought by the government. Kayakers have struggled for years for permission to access the river via the road from Lake Tennyson, despite the fact that there is a paper road there. NZRCA will approach DOC about formalising this access. The Landsborough has been kayaked since about 1974. The Hooker-Landsborough Wilderness Area eliminates any access upstream of Kea flat. This removes a day from the



3-day journey, and the eliminated day contains both the most challenging paddling and the most spectacular scenery of the entire trip.

The Waipara has been made illegal by the gazet-ting of the Olivines Wilderness area. Only a small kink in the boundary, down from Bevan Col to Lake Waipara, would have been needed to place the put-in outside of the wilderness area.

In the cases of the Landsborough, Waiatoto and Waipara, kayakers were not consulted when the wilderness area boundaries were deter-mined, nor did any Government agency seek to ensure access to the recreational amenity.

In the North Island, recent news is that Hori-zon Energy and Opotoki District Council are discussing the lifting of the Water Conserva-tion Order on the Motu, so that 4 dams could be constructed. The Motu is the North Island equivalent to the Karamea, a 4-day wilderness trip of grade 3-4 difficulty and was the first ever river protected by a WCO. A Water Conserva-tion Order is the river equivalent of a National Park. Whether it be by hydro-developers, local councils or DOC, the crown jewels of NZ's whitewater recreation amenity are threatened.

Left: Waiatoto River by Robin Rutter Baumann

Opposite: Glenroy River by Alison Kobout



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

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The Black Issue

in mourning for the imminent loss of NZ's whitewater amenity

MOTU

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WHAKAPAPANUI

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WHERE NEXT...?

The Hydro Hit-list

All found in recent electricity industry documents