



Annual Report 2014

The 2013 / 2014 reign of the executive started with the last release of the Wairoa season. I am intentionally avoiding making any comparisons between the flipping of the Exec raft on the Mothers Nightmare and the events of this year. In no particular order and without indicating their position on (or out of) the raft the Executive for 2013 / 2014 year was:

Hugh Canard - Patron

Matthew Bennett - President

Jonathon Hunt - Webmaster

Peter Davis - Membership

Doug Rankin - SI Conservation

Sean Bellamy - Access

Stu Richards - Admin

Debbie Bloxham - NZ Canoeing Editor

Graeme Wilson - Vice President

Martina Naplawa - Communications

Marnie Fornusek - Finance

Ally Price - NI Conservation

James Rae - Safety

Aidan Haig - Education

Evan Freshwater - Wgtn Liaison

The past year should be remembered as a year of wins. I did not expect to be writing that however I am in awe of the success that have been made on behalf of kayakers. Now, none of these will go down as noticeably as the Mokihinui but read through the list from the conservation officers and be awed. While the Hawea Whitewater Park is last year's news, never before have so many kayakers been taking so much big air in New Zealand. The Nevis is now protected, there will be no power from the Matakītaki and Canterbury still has water in the Hurunui. These and every other advance made by Whitewater NZ is a testament of the power of a group of passionate people.

We cannot consider ourselves done yet though. There are some very looming problems ahead in conservation and access. To overcome these we will need to front up to some realities in our finances and these will have to be solved through our membership and that requires communications. It is clear kayaking in New Zealand is supported by a team of heroes that kayak at every opportunity and spend more time writing, talking and tearing out their hair than on the water. This group is unknown on the water and includes all of the executive, the expert witnesses, the advocates and in surprising new appearance - designers. Yes designers. There are a number of people designing water features for kayakers. Hawea is an obvious one, with WERO in Auckland being the most ambitious. There have been approaches from another three outfits including Timon Maxey who has a very functional low key kayaking and art venue concept that he hopes to pitch to Wellington and sees has possibilities for other cities. So step aside mountain bikers and rugby, we are kayakers and we demand our water, access and facilities.

After the praise it is with sadness and great respect that I say goodbye to the outgoing members of the Executive. Each of you has offered freely of your time and expertise and made an immeasurable value to the kayakers of New Zealand.

Conservation – Doug Rankin (SI Conservation), Ally Price (NI Conservation) & Graeme Wilson (Vice President)

This year has been another extremely busy one with activities on a number of fronts. Fortunately Doug Rankin has been able to work nearly full time (voluntary!) on conservation issues over this past year. He has been ably assisted by vice president Graeme Wilson and NI conservation officer Ally Price - who also wear "hats" in the Whitewater Canoe Club and the Auckland University Canoe Club, respectively - and of course many others around the country submitting and representing kayakers on matters of interest.

We have also had a number of significant positive results this year, much of it the result of years of effort and groundwork laid by those that have gone before. To those folk we will always be eternally grateful.



Matakitaki River

After some years of investigating a dam on the Matakitaki River, we are delighted to see that Network Tasman has now decided not to proceed and has placed its land holdings in the valley on the market. The classic middle Matakitaki run would have been inundated, and the lower (Earthquake) run would have been massively affected. Congratulations and thanks to all those who opposed this scheme, and in particular Mick Hopkinson and Tony Ward-Holmes.

Waitaha River and the Morgan Gorge

The fate of the fabulous Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River, an 'Everest' of rivers run on the West Coast (it has only been run successfully 3 times to date such is its difficulty), hangs in the balance. Westpower on the Coast wants to build a run of river hydroelectricity scheme on this untouched wilderness river. The scheme proposes to take 23 cumecs of water from the river at the bottom of Kiwi Flat just above the Morgan Gorge and leave a residual flow of 3.5 cumecs in the Morgan Gorge. We have ascertained from flow data provided by Westpower that unless they provide flow days that we can use the resource will be completely lost to kayakers if the scheme goes ahead. The placement of a large concrete weir at the entrance to the gorge will significantly damage the beauty and naturalness of the setting and potentially add an additional hazard. It will also remove the last 1.5 km of the run at the bottom of the Morgan Gorge and/or add this to the portage. Westpower is applying to DOC in mid-June for a concession to proceed with the development. If successful they will apply for resource consents. We will keep everyone posted on when submissions on the proposal can be lodged, either to DOC or the West Coast Regional Council.

Nevis River

Glenn Murdoch along with Maree Baker-Galloway helped orchestrate the Whitewater NZ case aimed at protecting kayaking values on the Class V Nevis River tributary of the Kawarau River in Central Otago, attended the announcement late last year by the Minister for the Environment, Amy Adams, on her decision on the outcome of an Environment Court Appeal. A number of expert kayakers including Gordy Raynor, Pete Simpson, Keith Riley, Dave Ritchie and Glenn presented kayaking evidence to an Environment Court hearing on the kayaking values of the run and the impact of the dam on kayaking values if it were to go ahead. Amy Adams announced that in line with the Court's majority decision the dam would not be permitted to go ahead and that the Nevis River would be included and protected under the Kawarau River Water Conservation Order. This is a fantastic outcome for this river, the paddling community and New Zealand!

Hurunui River

After years of argument and commitment to have the outstanding white water values of the upper Hurunui River recognised, we finally have reached a hiatus with recognition of the values of the river by way of a damming prohibition on the North and South branches in the Hurunui and Waiau Rivers Regional Plan. We have been involved in a massive effort to input into various consultation, planning and appeal processes to look after this river, with mixed success. Our original application to have a WCO on the upper Hurunui was effectively gazumped by the Government's changes to water management in Canterbury so we've had to rely instead on the planning approach.

In addition, water resource consents have been granted to the Hurunui Water Project for a massive take of water (20% of the whole river discharge but all at lower flows and so impacting hugely on the river flows we and others use!) from lower reaches of the Hurunui River below Maori Gully for irrigation in the region, and for a water storage facility in the adjacent Waitohi River Catchment. Sadly there will be some impact on flow availability in the Hawarden Gorge run down below Maori Gully, and a larger impact on flow availability for the beginners Lower Hurunui Lowry Peaks Gorge run. We have negotiated a very limited number of no-take flow days as mitigation in the Hawarden Gorge run but were unsuccessful in getting anything for the lower Hurunui run. However, as the river will not be dammed the lower sections will still be able to be run at times of high flows. As we understand it the project is now going into the next phase of feasibility study and design in readiness for the next stages of consent applications, investment and build. Congratulations and thanks to all those who have been involved in these processes, and in particular Tony Ward-Holmes, Ian Fox, Hugh Canard, Graeme Wilson and Doug Rankin.

We have also presented evidence to a Hearing on the application by Ngāi Tahu Forest Estates Ltd to change land use at Balmoral Forest and convert the property into a dairy farming operation. We participated in the Hearing because toxic algal blooms have started to appear in the lower Hurunui River and these effectively exclude us and other river users from the resource because of the health



hazard they pose. These blooms are arising because of the farming runoff into the river, and the NTFE proposal would add significantly to that runoff. We await the Commissioners decision.

National Policy Statement on Freshwater Amendments

Whitewater NZ submitted on amendments proposed to the National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management 2011. Sadly, in our view, and that of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment in her submission, the document legitimises the parlous state of poor water quality throughout the country in the choice of water quality parameters it makes for two compulsory values of ecosystem health and human health. The effect of the parameters they want to introduce would be that they do not require rivers to be safe or clean for swimming and nor do they guarantee ecosystem health. Until there is a requirement to improve water quality across all regions across the whole country and to use parameters that perhaps more correctly reflect what New Zealanders would like for their rivers in terms of ecosystem and human health values, the water quality of New Zealand's freshwater ways is likely to remain compromised and possibly decline further in the face of ongoing intensive farming and dairy development.

Canterbury Issues

Despite a massive effort by Whitewater NZ and the Whitewater Canoe Club to have white water river recreation values included in the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan (CLWRP) and sub-regional plans, we seem to have achieved very little. In our view in part this has arisen out of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) process failing to properly deal with recreation values and interests at present, its primary focus seems to be on infrastructure development. It is also clear that there are significant information gaps in knowledge about kayaking (and other recreation) values on rivers in the Canterbury Region. Recently some Canterbury kayakers have been involved in producing a detailed report for Environment Canterbury detailing the Region's treasured white water kayaking runs and the flows required to retain their values (see

<http://ecan.govt.nz/publications/Reports/kayaking-canterbury-rivers.pdf>).

This report aims to assist with incorporation of our river values into future plans. We are also talking to Environment Canterbury Commissioners and the Regional Water Committee (part of the CWMS) with a view to having our values more appropriately included in the CLWRP. We also intend to talk to other regional councils with a view to informing them of valued kayaking runs in their regions so that they too can more appropriately include our values into their plans.

Environment Court Appeal of Tasman District Council Regional Management Plan

Tasman District Council (TDC) planners about three years ago undertook extensive studies to examine various community uses and values of rivers in their region with a view to listing valued recreation resources including kayaking in the Tasman Regional Management Plan (TRMP). TDC went ahead with this but various power companies and farmers appealed naming any valued kayaking river sections in the plan. The Nelson Canoe Club, Mick Hopkinson and Whitewater NZ joined this appeal. After recent mediation in the Environment Court it has been agreed to have general statements made about kayaking values for rivers in the region in the TRMP and some more specific statements about the Buller River and its tributaries.

We have actively supported TDC in their stance looking after our values, and although we don't quite have what we want stated in the current plan, the intention of TDC is to further develop and incorporate our values more fully along with management plans in the future. This is something that we would like to see all regional councils do in the near future, so we view working closely with councils that are interested in recognising and addressing our values as very important. When our values are stated in plans we have a better chance of having them recognised and accommodated.

RMA Reforms

The government seems to have gone very quiet at present over proposed RMA reforms that it was possibly going to announce before Christmas last year. Perhaps they don't want to rock the boat too much in election year. Let's hope some of the feedback and submissions by various river users and bodies involved in water management and freshwater values have been successful in persuading the government that many of their proposed reforms were of little or no value. It remains to be seen. We will announce any proposals as soon as they come to hand and what we suggest people do about submissions on them.



Conservation Strategy

The final version of our conservation strategy will be presented to the AGM. This strategy discusses our values and will be a key part of our communication with decision makers at the various local, regional and national levels. It now remains to be compiled into a suitable format for publication (Debbie Bloxham will help) with photographs (Zak Shaw has offered to help here).

River Survey and Inventory

Work is about to begin on an inventory which identifies key rivers in each region for inclusion in a nationwide river survey similar to the last one carried out by the New Zealand Canoeing Association in 1991. We will be in touch with members in once we have made more progress with development of the survey and a budget for completing it. We also want to look at routinely collecting flow information from kayakers so that we can document flow requirements of paddlers on rivers throughout the country.

Kawarau River – threat of jet boats on Dogleg run

Kawarau Jet Services Holding Company has applied to the Queenstown and Lakes District Council to jet-boat down through Smith's Falls to the bungy bridge across the Kawarau. A number of clubs and other interests such as rafting companies have submitted on this application opposing this proposal. We await hearing from the QLDC.

Mohaka River Plan

Hawkes Bay Regional Council have established a catchment consultation group that Ally Price has joined along with Bernie Kelly from the Hawkes Bay Canoe Club and Norm Brown from Mohaka Rafting to look at the river this year. They will no doubt assist with ensuring our recreational values and flow requirements are appropriately recognised on this outstanding river, which has a WCO.

2014 Treasurers Report – Marnie Fornusek

Financial Performance

Our operating deficit of \$3352 was up \$1973 on the previous year's deficit of \$5336. Revenue levels were down on last year by \$9295 as previous years income included \$10,798 from Meridian Energy for payment of legal & witness costs for the Mokihinui Appeal.

Annual subscriptions were up this year in all categories – individuals increased by \$270 to \$1100, Associates from NIL to \$30, Family memberships from \$50 to \$150. Club subscriptions increased by \$3760 from \$4860 to \$8620 but this included \$3060 that related to previous years memberships. With our new membership system in place we are seeking to get all clubs to re-join. Donations were down from \$13148 to \$1415 (previous year "donations" included the recovery from Meridian Energy). Interest received down by \$139 from \$1104 to \$965. Sales of NZ Whitewater (\$105) and the Whanganui River Guide (\$485) were the same as last year. Revenue from advertising in NZ Canoeing was \$432. Other income was Nil.

Expenditure was down by \$11268. Conservation costs were up to \$4041 from \$2625 – includes \$1015 of expenses towards attendance by Doug Rankin at Rivers Group conference and flights for Glen Murdoch for to attend the Nevis Media conference (\$611). Website expenses were similar to last year at \$2022. Legal expenses were down from \$7211 last year (mainly due to Mokihinui appeal) to \$1058. Legal expenses this year were related to Waikato Navigation Bylaw and the Hurunui River (\$712 which was half the cost – Whitewater Canoe Club paid the other half). Advertising costs were \$1333 for a half page advert in Graham Charles' Whitewater Guide. There was also a write off \$120 of accounts receivable for advertising in NZ Canoeing. Note that last years' advertising \$2724 includes a lot of write offs against advertising to give a loss of \$664 for advertising.

Administration costs were down by \$4280. This included an increase in administration services from \$1185 to \$1788, an increase in accounting and audit fees by \$430 to \$980 but travel by executive was down by \$2454 from \$5537 to \$3083, as were bank fees by \$33 and other administration expenses by \$2936 due to less AGM expenses. Accounting and audit fees of \$739 include \$230 towards audit of 2013/14 accounts and the rest is for the Xero accounting software fees.

Newsletter production and postage costs \$2121 were similar to last year \$2183. Whanganui River guide costs were down by \$678; last year included \$644 for printing 300 copies.

Xero Accounting Software

The accounting system was moved to Xero in 2012. Xero has made both managing the accounts during the year and the preparation of the financial statements easier.



Bank Accounts

At the beginning of October 2013, the bank accounts were shifted from ANZ (previously National Bank) to Westpac to take advantage of Westpac's online banking for non-profit organisations (no fees and allows multiple approving signatories on electronic payments). The term deposit followed at end of October after it matured. The system is working well; no need for cheques.

Financial Position and Movement in Equity

There was a decrease of \$2190 from \$45974 to \$43784 in the bank accounts. Accounts receivables of \$3402 are for Water Safety funding \$3334 and Whanganui River guide sales. Liabilities include the Water Safety funding and Accounts Payable of \$1382. Whitewater NZ equity decreased by \$3352 from \$45822 to \$42469 at 31 March 2014.

Annual Audit of Accounts

Accounts for the 2012/13 year were audited at a cost of \$230 + postage. The 2013/14 accounts have been sent to our auditor Zane Colville and may be ready in time for the 2014 AGM.

Access – Sean Bellamy

The past year has been a nervous time for access with the sale of the power companies. It is pleasing to say that relationships seem to be intake. Genesis continues to set the bench mark by being a good supporter of kayakers. Genesis has a large kayaking river portfolio with the Waikaremoana scheme, the Tongariro, Whakapapa and the Tekapo. The Waikaremoana and the Tekapo both have fish hooks and Genesis is showing their colours through their commitment to finding shared solutions. For the Waikaremoana releases they are concerned by the low numbers of people experiencing these fantastic sections of river and are actively working with Hawkes Bay Canoe Club and Whitewater NZ to find ways of increasing this number. The Tekapo is managed by the Tekapo Whitewater Trust of which WWNZ is a signatory to the formation of the trust. The challenge here is that over the years members of the trust have moved on and not replaced. Genesis took over the Tekapo power scheme from Meridian in an asset shuffle and found that some of the required activities and functions had not been done and are diligently working correct this. It is unclear how this will be resolved however Genesis is absolutely committed to make sure that it continues as an asset for kayakers. As for the Tongariro – it remains a main stay of the north islanders kayaking diet and guaranteed to provide a fantastic social gathering.

To balance the access equation, we have still not found a satisfactory resolution with the Waikato Regional Council and Mighty River Power about access to the Waikato River. This started as a spat over Aratiatia however it quickly become apparent that there are bigger issues at stake. We have sought legal opinion and it seems that we will need to pursue a legal course of action. This will require funding greater than our reserves so it will most likely require a fund raising programme.

Sitting on the fence is Mangahou. While a boutique feather in the kayakers cap it is slowly being forgotten from the paddling circuit. The gates that control the lake flowing into the river have been inoperable for the past years and we won't get a planned and paddleable flow on the river until they have been repaired. This has been frustrating for kayakers however probably not as much as it is for the power company. This is a case of staying in touch and not letting them forget that they have a legal requirement to provide water in the future.

Communications & The Website – Martina Naplawa & Jonathan Hunt

Newsletters

Over the last 12 months 10 Newsletters were sent out on average to 5,837 members. Very few inward emails were received but we did receive some positive feedback regarding our Monthly Newsletters and some feedback regarding how our Letters were displaying, which were fixed by Jonathan.



Facebook

From May 2 2013 to May 1 2014 our 'Likes' went from 424 to 850 an increase of 426 'Likes', 1 'Unlike' and 3 'Hide' actions were registered for our site. One of the most encouraging signs of our Facebook activities was that some of our posts are starting to reach up to 1200 views. Our audience is made up of 46% of Women and 54% of men and our biggest age group tends to be the between 18 and 34 years of age which make up 45% of our total audience. (who choose to add their age to their Facebook details)

We have fans from New Zealand, UK, USA, Australia, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Norway and Sweden, Indonesia, Malaysia, Spain, Israel, Nepal, Peru, Italy, Brazil, Isle of man, Fiji, Singapore, Russia, Turkey, Egypt Argentina, Cyprus and Czech Republic.

Our largest group from New Zealand is Canterbury followed by Auckland, Wellington and Rotorua.

Twitter

Twitter was mainly updated by Jonathan this year with only few posts from Communications.

The Website

The website has continued to be a very valuable resource for Whitewater NZ and gets a lot of people visiting it from both New Zealand and overseas. With our increased use of regular emails to the membership that direct people to the site for additional information this number is increasing. We are starting to get enquiries for advertising space on the website and this is a very positive development that we will have to look at how we utilise it for maximum effectiveness.

Some initiative has been taken to improve various features of the website including getting access to geo mapping and river data that can be combined with our online river guide information and river hazards information. Another part of the site that we'd like to upgrade is the buy / sell. There is a huge potential for these features to become unsurpassed. The reality is that it will take money to make the big jump from where we currently are to this vision.

Safety – James Rae

It is pleasing to be able to say that kayakers haven't been making headline on the safety front. Is it because of the number of river rescue course that have been running? In the past two years Water Safety NZ has providing considerable funding for these courses and it is pleasing to say that we have successfully funded 83 people to undertake a two day course.

Along with this has been a renewing of our relationship with the New Zealand Outdoor Instruction Association (NZOIA). They funded a group of the country's leading river rescue trainers to review and update the rescue syllabus' and have acknowledged that the Kayak Instructor Syllabus' originated from Whitewater NZ. They will be assisting in communicating the Whitewater NZ message through their large instructor pool.

Membership – Pete Davis

Our recently installed technology based membership management system is starting to pay off. We are now seeing old members that we had lost contact with reconnecting and renewing their membership and we've been very successful at purging the database of names and addresses that are obsolete.

Now we face a big question of our membership structure. This became very visible at the 2013 AGM when it came to voting and a small number of clubs holding the majority of votes and would have been able to dictate decisions and direction. It was hoped that alternative membership models would be presented to a vote for this AGM however the executive has not been able to develop the models to a level where they are ready for presentation. This will continue as a project into the next year.



In Closing

Last year I closed out the Annual Report with "*Thank you very much for your support. May the rivers flow for you!*" While this sentiment is still very true, for 2014 on I want to close with a challenge and a hope, that I can inspire you with something bolder. Flooded rivers are not good enough for our needs and farm effluent and irrigation schemes are a lousy substitute. Whitewater NZ is the defender of an activity as fundamental to New Zealanders as Rugby and every person who gets inside a boat to go with the flow or huck the gnar needs to get in behind make it very clear through action and word that protect and providing for paddling is non-negotiable. So I hope to be on the water, in the news and speaking at the hearings with you in the year to come. We cannot succeed without you and every other kayaker that lives in or visits our land.

Matthew Bennett
President
Whitewater NZ

president@rivers.org.nz

