



**Whitewater NZ**

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## **Whitewater NZ**

### **Annual report to members**

**27 August 2016**

#### **Patron's report (Hugh Canard)**

I have been representing Whitewater NZ on a number of advisory bodies since 2004. It's a long list. In some cases it has been as a kayaker, and on others it's associated with community or expertise – in recreation, tourism or water management, in particular with groundwater contamination. It should not surprise anyone that kayaking was not top of mind amongst the participating stakeholders when I started. It's taken a decade to be at the point where they ask me for my view and I don't have to push it on them.

The current bodies I'm on are both regional and national. It's reasonable to review whether all this sitting around the table(s) is of benefit to whitewater recreational kayaking, since that's what Whitewater NZ is all about.

It's been a challenge to engage with elected paddling bodies, so I've largely just tried to follow a set of principles.

1. I'm the expert in the forum on what matters re kayaking on whitewater in New Zealand. If you don't agree substitute me. If I don't know I'll say so, and I'll canvass my constituency and try and find out.
2. I don't represent any other body and I don't speak for Whitewater NZ, only myself.
3. My views are my personal views, and others will judge if they are representative or not.
4. I have other life experience in water management and regional and national governance and I recognize that there are many other values around water that I wish to understand, and that needs to be reciprocated by other stakeholders with respect to understanding and acknowledging my stakeholder group's interests in water.
5. I will attend on the basis that regardless of my specialist knowledge I will draw on my best efforts to resolving all our issues with water management in New Zealand.

This has worked well and the Terms of Reference of both LAWF and the CRWC say this in more words. LAWF is bound by "what's discussed in LAWF stays in LAWF" rules. The regional bodies are open to the public. LAWF has Reports, CRWC has Minutes. Both operate on consensus, not votes.

To summarise;

### **Benefits**

- Kayaking and kayakers are now recognized as stakeholders in water management at national policy level, and in Canterbury. Mike Birch has a similar regional role in the Wairarapa Whaitua.
- Environmental NGOs acknowledge our influence at national level. We are represented and only three other e-NGOs are inside the loop. (F&B, EDS and Ecologic)
- We have had some influence on some policies – specifically on water storage, allocations now recognize water-based recreation as an activity to be considered, and latterly on the “swimmability” issue.
- Hydro, irrigation, and agriculture lobbyists are on speaking terms and know we exist and can be trusted
- Regional councils are starting to consider our needs in regional water planning processes.

### **Costs**

- It's a significant input of time and energy for me, and a few others.
- We can be constrained in speaking out on some issues. This is why F&G left some of these regional and national bodies.
- There is always the risk of “capture” in any collaborative process. In my experience it works both ways. There isn't anyone on the LAWF or CRWC that hasn't heard about kayaking values and interests.

### **Up Until Now**

In looking back, what has been achieved?

The major achievement has been the networking. It is instructive to think of our relationship with the hydro generators 10 years ago. We didn't know them and they didn't even think about us. Now I'm on first name terms with the major hydro generator senior legal counsels and senior planners. The same applies to a number of chief scientists and CEOs at the regional councils.

I have to listen to all the stakeholders' views, and occasionally they have to listen to mine. It's important to understand that each participant is expected to contribute from their personal well of experience and expertise, not just as a lobbyist. For my part I am credited by the chair of LAWF with the breakthrough that put water storage into a greater perspective as potentially capable of offering environmental and recreational benefits – if designed for more than just economic goals. They know that, as with iwi and e-NGOs, our preference is always natural rivers. Everyone now understands that storage has many costs other than concrete, and any new or existing water storage should be used for the full range of other uses, and in fact requires a social licence from all stakeholders. This is a far cry from “If you guys want a flow release, it will cost you \$XX,000.”

Our many conversations with Meridian Energy over the Mokihinui were genuine and based on mutual trust. Graeme Wilson and I exhausted every avenue with Meridian and when we concluded it was a river or a dam, that conclusion was mutual.

## Where are we now?

I'll summarise;

- Allocations (consented) need to be scaled back in many catchments. This is because it is recognized that a number of catchments are over-allocated. This affects minimum flows and water quality in lowland rivers. This will take 35 years or more to resolve because that's how long consents have been granted for.
- Recreation is one of the values that modern water management must consider. Typically we would have to raise the issue as it was rarely considered, and now it's presented in the applicant's evidence. We're on the Agenda.
- Water quality is an issue for much water-based recreation. Kayaking is complicated. Not to us, but it had to be explained to other stakeholders and officials. It's fair to say that my kayaking explanations have caused further work to be done on "swimmability".

We've been hearing a lot about "Swimmability" and "Wadeable". This discussion started with MfE trying to classify kayaking, jet boating, swimming etc as 'recreation' of varying types and then setting water quality limits for each. I pushed for amount of bugs ingested, as there is science on how much water one ingests in different forms of water-based recreation. The scientists then worked how many bugs/litre and they know how many bugs make you sick. This approach is supported by a lot of science, and you can stop worrying about how people get wet and start looking at how much water you ingest.

Now we are talking Primary Contact Recreation and Secondary Contact Recreation, (PCR and SCR). PCR means your head goes under. SCR means it doesn't.

Just for whitewater kayaking;

Grade 1 and 2 – Intermediates and Experts – will typically not get their heads immersed = SCR; For novices it's wet exits and capsizes, so probably PCR.

Grade 3 and above – PCR

For other forms of kayaking it's a mixture of skill level and difficulty.

Generally E-coli is the indicator/proxy for other bugs, so it's used as the measure. Leptospirosis can be caught from a splash so "wadeable" has become "incidental contact".

It's complicated for whitewater kayaking because flooded rivers are laden with E-coli, yet we kayakers bust ourselves getting on flooded rivers, often preferentially so. I haven't heard of any hot paddler saying they won't run the Ashley or the Makarengorengo because it will be laden with bugs. We need to be careful when we advocate for water quality. I'm referring here to **whitewater kayaking**, not other paddle sports.

The NOF is now less 'moderated' by officials under instruction, but it's still a hot potato for the current minister. "Wadeable" got laughed off the stage. The minister wants a defensible, as opposed to risible, definition of "swimmable."

The current water quality for recreation limits are in Bands with the national bottom line being suitable for PCR. Since most polluted rivers are in urban or lowland farmed catchments, our whitewater interests are mostly impacted when we are being instructed. Pool (clean), to local rivers

(often crap), to foothills or alpine rivers (usually clean). Care is needed too when WWNZ advocates on water quality in natural rivers, as something like 30% will fail the NOF bottom line in their natural state.

The NOF bottom lines have a statistical basis for exceedances and present thinking amongst the panel and officials and LAWF, is for flood flows will be excluded from those stats. This means our treasured flood flows don't count – either way.

Other contaminants like nitrates and phosphorus and sediment are under discussion. These three are co-contributors to what we're calling "conspicuous periphyton growth". Following that is ecotoxicity to indigenous critters and ecotoxic to animals outbreaks.

### Where to from here?

We are currently in a down cycle of dam building so we're 'only' facing a few projects, not some really big ones. The economics will cycle back and we need to prepare. In my view, WWNZ needs to focus only on those issues that matter to whitewater paddlers. Yes, we should back our friends in Fish & Game and Forest & Bird, and we should band together with rafters, river bugs and the emerging packrafters, but we do not represent these people.

Since whitewater kayakers can paddle safely on poor water quality with some health risk that we either accept or do not, there is a need for Whitewater NZ to get their heads around the issues. These are the issues – in order of priority – in my opinion.

Attribute	Comments
Volume	No water means no paddling. It's binary.  Reduced volume = reduced experiences.  Volume creates hydraulic features which are sensitive to variation
Access	Can't get on the river, no paddling  Land and air
Objective Danger	Human-made structures kill paddlers  River protection  Hydro dams and weirs  Intake structures
Water Quality	Very dependent on difficulty, skill levels, and activity  Clarity is a factor that may be independent of biochemical content  See remarks in text re floods and natural river water quality
Experiential	Impacts of other users, landscape, wildness, remoteness
Convenience  (in relation to the other factors)	Distance from population centres is always a factor. This explains (to lay persons) the popularity of Wero and the Hawea Wave, but doesn't explain why we will defend the Waitaha.

Some examples of the above.

- Different rivers have different responses to flow variability. A couple of cumecs can make all the difference or be undetectable. This means we need to focus on those key attributes and try and get others to understand why, and then work with them.
- Reducing nitrates in the lower Rangitata is probably immaterial to whitewater kayaking, but is very important in the Mararoa or the Mohaka.
- Getting Taupo's sewage out of the Waikato had a measureable impact on our experience at Ngaawapurua (PCR), but probably means less (to whitewater paddlers) at sites below this point.
- Access is going to be increasingly important. Opening up St James by land gave us the Upper Waiau. Getting kayakers by air into the Mt Aspiring National Park Management Plan means we can paddle the Waiatoto.
- Having no takes on the Waimakariri during the day in summer is important to kayakers and rafters. Trout and salmon want it during the night as well, but I would not advocate that as Whitewater NZ, but would work with F&G to combine our advocacy.
- We have examples of clashes with other user groups. This means we should nurture relationships with jet boaters, for example, but never speak for them.
- Regional councils are now starting to include kayaking in the planning. It's still early days. Some planners are kayakers! Understanding planners' needs is important, so aggressive approaches to regional councils should be avoided. When all else fails we'll see them in court. Going in hard at the outset simply ensures that court is the only place we'll meet them and then we'll probably lose.

### **The state of the NOF**

This has moved on since the public consultation recently. These changes suit whitewater paddlers.

*The assessment of attribute-state should account for whether the times the water body is suitable for primary contact are times people actually want to use it.*

This became complicated once I introduced kayaking into the picture. We often paddle in the winter, whereas everyone just thought - swimming? --- that's a summer activity. E-coli is only monitored in summer in many regions.

This approach fits well within the existing NPS-FM by providing a national framework, with local community decision-making. By adopting this approach, more waterways would be able to be managed for primary contact without introducing a potentially extensive exceptions framework that would undermine the credibility of the NPS-FM. Community decision-making will be centred on the desired amount of time a waterway should meet the primary contact threshold, rather than a binary decision of whether to manage it for primary contact or merely "wadeability."

### **Specific proposals from LAWF**

To give effect to this approach, the Forum recommends the following modifications to the way primary contact is dealt with in the NPS-FM (these work as a package and should be implemented together):

- The preamble and objectives A1 and A2 should be strengthened to reflect communities' aspirations for primary contact in waterways.

- A new compulsory national value for primary contact (alongside one for secondary contact) should be inserted into Appendix 1 of the NPS-FM to make it clear that primary contact is of national importance (suggested wording for the new primary contact value is included in Appendix 4).
- Instead of a single *E. coli* attribute, there should be two – one reflecting a secondary contact *E. coli* standard and one reflecting a primary contact *E. coli* standard, so that at those times the infection risk from primary contact is too high, waterways are still managed to an acceptable risk level for secondary contact.
- Subject to testing and agreement from MoH and the relevant scientific experts, the new primary contact *E. coli* attribute should have a national bottom-line and band levels that vary according to the proportion of time a water body meets a primary contact *E. coli* threshold.
- Alongside these modifications, uniform, systematic sampling, monitoring and reporting regimes for *E. coli* should be made compulsory.
- In the longer-term, the MfE/MoH Microbiological Water Quality Guidelines for Marine and Freshwater Recreational Areas should be reviewed and updated with close involvement from MoH.

The Forum has also agreed to further consider primary contact during the next phase of its work. This will include defining aspects of primary contact other than microbiological infection risk – including aesthetic, access, clarity and cultural factors.

#### **Messages to Whitewater NZ**

1. The adversarial days aren't over but they have largely been replaced by collaborative processes. How much we get from these new community advisory arrangements is very dependent on the mutual trust we generate within those processes. This requires social skills and a willingness to listen to everyone's views. Only then will they listen to ours. We are expected to have clashes of values, but if the process works **all the others will be trying to figure out a solution to our problem**, not fighting us over it.
2. We cannot manage everything from the centre – the 'head office' approach. Whitewater NZ should support regional and local networks to the point where they are empowered through shared knowhow and by carrying the national voice. Too often it has been the other way round.
3. Whitewater NZ as the national body has to re-define its purposes and become a first class networker. Firstly amongst paddlers in and out of clubs; secondly with other recreational user groups; thirdly with other stakeholders (hydro, farmers etc) and finally with decision-makers. Some of this is online, and some is kanohi ki te kanohi. (face to face)
4. Whitewater NZ must raise funds to support advocacy across the range of issues I have listed. This will only be possible if paddlers see direct impact on their local river or confronting issue. The only way I can see is by being the dominant online presence for all whitewater kayaking. There are ways of monetising online content and others like F&B raise money for specific single issue campaigns.
5. We need to form long term relationships with manawhenua iwi where we paddle.

## **Vice president's report (Graeme Wilson)**

The last year has provided some significant highs and lows for Whitewater NZ, and for New Zealand's paddling community.

We were all immensely saddened by the death of Sean Curtis in March, after he got into difficulty on the Collier's Gorge section of the Whitcombe. Sean was a passionate and experienced kayaker who had kayaked around New Zealand and internationally.

In the last few weeks we have celebrated the amazing achievements of Luuka Jones and Mike Dawson in slalom at the Rio games. It's fantastic to see these kayakers achieve on the world stage – in what in New Zealand is sadly a minority sport without the funding accorded to other sports.

We've also had the release of Bill Park's wonderful "Rivering" documentary. As well as introducing a new word into our vocabulary, Bill's movie has attempted to explain why we choose to paddle – what brings us back time and time again – and importantly focussed on paddlers at all levels of expertise. Bill also captured some of the history of our sport in New Zealand. I was privileged to speak on behalf of Whitewater NZ at its official launch.

It was also wonderful to see the opening of the Wero whitewater park in South Auckland. Whitewater NZ's Access Officer James Rae attended the official opening. Wero has the potential to introduce significant numbers of people to whitewater, to slalom, and then to provide cross-over onto our rivers. It's a case of bringing whitewater to the people, rather than the people to whitewater, but we hope it will immerse and encourage growth across all watersports.

In the South Island, the Tekapo whitewater course has been significantly enhanced over the past season. The works include the remediation of the intake weir, the construction of numerous new wave features, sculpting and deepening of the existing eddies, construction of new eddies and eddy walls, the improvement in venue access tracks, a 75 metre extension to the outlet area of the course to better utilise the wasted gradient at the discharge end, removal of the right hand steel sluice gates that backed water level up in the lower course, which after removal pushed gradient further up the course, and the repair of numerous holes and cracks that had developed in the course over time. These tasks were completed utilising all the remaining Meridian funds and around \$6000 of the Genesis remitted funding has also been spent. Significant volunteer hours were contributed by many people, particularly members from the Central Otago and White Water Canoe Clubs. An enormous thanks to those volunteers, but in particular to Alan "Sarge" Hoffman and the other trustees for their efforts on our behalf.

Congratulations to Doug Rankin and the team who have worked for a number of years to prepare a Water Conservation Order application for the Ngaruroro River. There's more detail in the conservation report below.

Thanks also to Nigel Parry who devoted himself to regaining access to the Mangahao (refer to the access report below).

In October 2015 Coroner Bain held the inquest into the death of Louise Jull on the Kaituna River. Matthew Bennett and John Snook, along with others, presented evidence in support of the kayaking community and in opposition to the deposition of the Bay of Plenty Harbormaster. The Coroner's report was neutral in its affect on kayaking - however following on from the inquest Matthew and John with the addition of Andy Uhl entered into productive consultation with the BoP Regional Council which has led to improvements on the Kaituna River.

Matthew Bennett was also used by the Coroner's Office to provide expert analysis in relation to Sean Curtis' death. The Coroner has yet to release her report and as Matthew's work is on behalf of the Coroner no information is yet able to be released.

After continued fine-tuning, I'm delighted to announce the long-awaited publication of our Conservation Strategy. This represents a considerable amount of thought and reflection by the executive over a number of years. Thanks in particular to Debbie Bloxham, whose design skills make the document leap off the page, and the stunning images provided by Zac Shaw and other photographers. Their pictures showcase what it is we want to protect.

In the last year Whitewater NZ has paused a little without the drive of a president. We were unsuccessful filling the role at our last AGM and in the period since. Hopefully this will be remedied at this AGM. However, most executive members remained busy in their portfolios, and I want to thank them for their generosity of spirit and their contributions.

This year's Executive comprised:

Conservation	Doug Rankin and Isaac Bain
Treasurer	Marnie Fornusek
Safety	Shaun McCracken
Access	James Rae
Communications	Martina Naplawa
Webmaster	Jonathan Hunt
Education	Aaron Osbourne
Membership	Peter Davis
Administration	Charis Wong
Vice-president	Graeme Wilson

Our patron has been Hugh Canard. Many of our Executive are seeking re-election. However, Charis, Pete, and Marty are creating more time in their lives to actually go paddling and have chosen not to seek re-election. On behalf of the Whitewater NZ members and paddlers throughout New Zealand, I want to thank them for their dedication to task and their sheer hard work. It's been a pleasure to work alongside these three and the rest of the executive team.



## **Conservation report (Doug Rankin and Isaac Bain)**

Our activities have continued apace this year on a number of fronts. Isaac Bain, a freshwater ecologist from Auckland, and past president of the Auckland University Canoe Club, has taken over the role of North Island Conservation Officer from Ally Price, while she spends some time overseas.

### **Kawarau River – threat of commercial jet boats on the Chinese Dogleg run**

Kawarau Jet Services Holding Company (KJet) is still pushing forwards with the aim of commercially jet boating down to the bungy bridge across the Kawarau River. This would allow them to take jet boats through Smith's Falls, the first rapid on the Chinese Dogleg section on the Kawarau River, which would pose a serious collision and wake hazard for rafters and kayakers using the river.

The various consents that Kawarau Jet Services Holdings Ltd (KJet) wanted to renew, including lapsed consents, to jet boat on the Kawarau River down to Smiths Fall, are being altered so that they will only permit KJet to boat down to the Arrow River confluence, as permitted by the current Navigation Safety Bylaw (NSB). A number of these changes are as a result of our communication with Queenstown Lakes District Council over what was proposed in the various consent applications. Whitewater NZ has strongly opposed these consent renewals, especially allowing jet boating to Smith's Falls, on safety and loss of amenity, and legal grounds. A pre-hearing meeting has been held where Ngaio Hart appeared on our behalf and a Hearing is planned for September this year.

A separate consent application by KJet, to jet boat down below the Arrow Confluence and through Smiths Falls to the Bungy Bridge and build a jetty, still stands and waits being heard. KJet have been collecting data on paddler use of the Chinese Dogleg section. Of course KJet have applied to the Queenstown Lakes District Council to have the NSB altered, as they need to, to facilitate such a change, but we have not heard anything further on this matter. Whitewater NZ, Quentin Smith, Central Otago Whitewater (COW), and local kayakers and rafters are keeping a close watch on this space. It is essential that we stay involved in this issue otherwise paddlers run the risk of being excluded from the river.

### **Waitaha River and the Morgan Gorge**

The fate of the fabulous Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River still hangs in the balance. Westpower has applied to DOC for concessions to proceed with the development, which DOC is still considering.

Tony Baldwin, a highly experienced legal and economic consultant and expert in the electricity industry in New Zealand, has continued to provide us with outstanding support on technical aspects concerning DOC's consideration of the concession application. Tony has provided an outstanding report that shows that the Waitaha Scheme is not needed and will be uneconomic in today's environment, and DOC has now accepted a number of other submissions that we have made over a year ago. Just recently we heard that DOC has finished a report on the matter and that a decision is expected soon.

A recent decision by the Government to more realistically charge for electricity reticulation throughout the country, may, however, help us. Up until now small companies such as Westpower, who may have generation ambitions, did not have to consider support for any existing generation capacity or infrastructure that may exist in their area, such as that from the national grid, and so had a free rein to propose whatever they liked. New responsibilities proposed under changes in regulations will see an end to this parlous situation, and so likely make the Westpower proposal even less economically favourable than it already is. Tony has also just written to DOC outlining the legal requirement that this matter needs to be included in their consideration of the concessions. Let's hope this will be a further nail in the coffin and that either Westpower withdraws or DOC declines the applications.

## **Ngaruroro Water Conservation Order (WCO) Application**

The Minister for the Environment, Nick Smith, has finally accepted the WCO Application we lodged on the Ngaruroro River along with four other applicants (Fish and Game, Forest and Bird, Operation Patiki and Jet Boating New Zealand) on 22<sup>nd</sup> December last year. The Ministry for the Environment is currently in the process of appointing a Special Tribunal (ST) to hear the application. Hopefully submissions will be called for shortly and we will need to mobilise paddlers to submit on the WCO. This is great news! After that a Hearing will be held, at which we and many others will have to present evidence on our case, after which the ST will make a recommendation on the WCO.

The Hawkes Bay Regional Council (HBRC) has continued to criticise and lobby the Minister against the WCO Application and this decision, which is sad to see. The HBRC seem to be out of step with a number of community aspirations, and especially those which want to protect any outstanding waterways and their values! HBRC has cited a number of reasons which we consider have no legal basis; none the least of which is that they would look after such outstanding values in their current community-based collaborative process designed to take into account all community values, and which has been going for four years.! Based on what they and other regional councils have done in the past in such processes this is highly unlikely.

## **Canterbury Water Issues; the Hurunui and other rivers**

As reported last year, farm and irrigation development in Canterbury is continuing apace with the government appointed Environment Canterbury Commissioners continuing to drive the new 'consultative' process for water management. We are concerned that there seems to be a greater focus on irrigation than on holistic planning looking at appropriate development of resources and recognising the competing needs of different community sectors and properly allowing for and providing for them all in an inclusive manner as promoted by the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS).

Many of those involved in the process say everyone's values are being allowed for but the reality is that they are not. In addition, the environment is going to be picking up the tab, with more polluted waterways and bodies being permitted in many of the Plans and Plan Variations being considered in the processes, contrary to the National Policy Statement on Freshwater (NPS). The NPS might start to limit some of these excesses but that remains to be seen. Nothing has changed from the view expressed in last year's report where we stated 'This is a very sad outlook in our view, for the whole of New Zealand, our rivers and groundwater, our environment and our 'clean green image''. As a blueprint for what is/might happen around the country this is all especially worrying.

The Canterbury Regional Council Hearing Commissioners decision on the application by Ngāi Tahu Forest Estates Ltd (NTFE), to use water from the Waiau River and to change land use at Balmoral Forest and convert the property into an extensive dairy farming operation, has finally been upheld. Whitewater NZ submitted on this issue because of the parlous state of the lower Hurunui River (toxic cyanobacteria blooms exclude us and others from the resource) and concerns over how the development would significantly worsen the state of the river. The Commissioners had produced a severely curtailed allocation of water from the Waiau River and land use change on what was originally applied for. NTFE had appealed the decision to the Environment Court, but they finally withdrew their appeal. NTFE have since reapplied for more water takes from the Waiau River but have said they will abide by nitrogen discharge limits in the recent decision arising from any of their farming operations.

The tension with water quality issues constraining irrigation development within the Canterbury region has not abated. The pressure from those who want to irrigate and expand their farming activities has continued with suggestions that some sub-Regional Plans put in place need to be

changed so that such constraints are removed. Thus, in the Hurunui catchment there is a significant push, for example, to remove the nitrogen and phosphorus load limit rules at SH1 in the Hurunui and Waiau River Regional Plan in the sub-regional plan change process. The limits were originally introduced to keep the river at least in its current state (albeit degraded) and help prevent further degradation in its water quality. Removal of constraints will only worsen the water quality in ground and surface water in and adjacent to the river.

We are still involved in a Waimakariri Zone Committee process looking at water quality and quantity limit setting processes in a sub-regional plan process, especially to look after recreational values in the zone and use this as a blue print for other zones. However, it is pretty clear that ECan have a very focussed agenda looking largely only at farming development options that are not fully costed (taking into account the cost of environmental impacts and their cleanup and/or damage to water quality) in their economic analysis and development 'scenarios' within the zone. It remains to be seen whether we will get expression and recognition and protection of our recreation values that we seek within the sub-regional Plan (and others throughout Canterbury).

Environment Canterbury (ECan) has taken over an initiative (of Whitewater NZ, Fish and Game and Jet Boat New Zealand's making) to gather more appropriate data on recreation and amenity values in the Canterbury region, to address targets on recreation and amenity values of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) and provide essential data for sub-regional water quality and quantity planning processes. This initiative was started after we complained to ECan early last year that they were not doing nearly enough in this space to meet the CWMS aims and goals, with which ECan agreed. We have had one workshop on the matter so far which was very limited in its scope, and it remains to be seen what will be produced. We know that resistance to inclusion or recognition of such values is very strong in many Zone and the Regional Committees, particularly from farming and local government interests.

In our view it is essential that Whitewater NZ and local paddlers remain actively involved in these Canterbury processes, as they are being used as a blueprint for similar processes throughout the country. Most importantly if we want our values recognised and looked after in plans in Canterbury (and throughout the country) we need to input into these processes. This is a particularly difficult task because as there are eleven Committees in all just for Canterbury alone, the number of meetings that need to be attended to stay across such matters is essentially impossible, unless we have massive support from many people. Furthermore, ECan has to accept that we might need and agree to planning changes to incorporate our values in plans, because if they don't we will never make progress, as any of our suggestions will always be out of scope when it comes to plan changes. In addition, it is apparent that we need expert assistance around framing planning rules to recognise and look after our values. We are acting on these issues.

#### **Next steps for fresh water – Government consultation document**

The Government has announced consultation on further changes it wishes to make to the RMA and the recently gazetted National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management 2014 (NPS). We have written a letter to the Minister for the Environment, Nick Smith, expressing concerns about changes proposed in one key area of the consultation document 'Next steps for fresh water'. In particular, changes to the NPS embedded in the proposals would legitimise further degradation of fresh water quality throughout the country, by allowing important 'water quality parameters' for rivers to vary within published National Objective Framework (NOF) bands, whilst claiming water quality was being maintained. However, this would not maintain or improve water quality, it would permit the opposite to happen, and would be completely contrary to the aims of the NPS and government's stated vision.

We presented these concerns in person to the Minister at a recent MfE public meeting in Christchurch held to consult on these changes. We also asked Dame Margaret Bazley, the Chair of Environment Canterbury (ECan), who chaired the meeting, for her views. The Minister essentially fobbed off our concerns and Dame Margaret did not comment. We had sent ECan a copy of our letter sent to the Minister for the Environment outlining our concerns at the proposal, but it seems to no avail. ECan has submitted in favour of this aspect of the proposals. The Minister has promised a reply to our letter but to date none has been received. We gave the Minister notice that if MfE, Regional Councils and Federated Farmers persist with supporting such nonsense we will never see water quality improvements being achieved throughout the country.

We presented a lengthy submission on these and other matters, such as on proposed changes to WCO legislation, where WCO processes would be made subservient to regional council processes, to the Ministry for the Environment. We have had no feedback on the submission.

### **Land and Water Forum**

Whitewater NZ is still represented in this forum by Hugh Canard, as he has since LAWF's inception. Fish and Game withdrew from this process last year as they felt it was producing very negative outcomes for the country and their constituents, and because they felt that they could not speak freely on such concerns whilst 'in the tent' and part of the LAWF.

Certainly the Government's selective cherry picking of LAWF recommendations, and adoption of the Ministry for the Environment NOF recommendations as part of the NPS arising out of the LAWF process, which the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment and Whitewater NZ severely criticised them for doing nothing to improve water quality in New Zealand (in fact quite the opposite, it would make matters worse), raises issues of LAWF's utility. Hugh recently reported on proposed changes being considered in the LAWF to the suitability of waterways for swimming (human health values) that the Government is considering for inclusion in the NPS. No doubt these changes have been in response to the enormous public pressure to see our waterways swimmable and not 'wadeable' as originally decided. 'Wadeable' is a far lower threshold. However, with the proposed changes it appears even the swimmable options are able to be chosen to be applied or not applied by 'communities', rather than being made compulsory.

### **Rangitata Diversion Race (RDR) consent for water take for large storage dam**

Rangitata Diversion Race Management Ltd (RDRML) have recently applied to ECan for a consent to take up to 10 cumecs via the RDR when flows in the Rangitata River are above 132.6 cumecs at the Klondyke gauge. The application has not been notified yet but should be soon. The consent is to fill a 53 million cubic metre storage dam near the Rangitata River to facilitate expanded irrigation development on the Canterbury Plains. As part of their plans they are proposing a White Water Course, which at the moment constitutes a one wave feature (and could possibly be expanded to about three features), and for which there are no guarantees there will be funding available.

The Water Conservation Order (WCO) on the Rangitata River, amongst other things, recognises the outstanding Class II-III run from the RDR down to Peel Forest, ideal for beginner and intermediate paddlers. The WCO only provides for limited flows for kayakers on this reach, up to a maximum of 77 cumecs, partly for historical (prior use) reasons, and the 33 cumec take by the RDR when the river is flowing in the 66 to 110 cumec flow range. Beyond flows of 110 cumecs we have no protection. The current flow takes have a massive impact on kayakers' access to useful flows, particularly for intermediate paddlers, and essentially mean the river is a shadow of its former self. It is very difficult to get good flows producing the classic good sized white water wave trains for which the river has been renowned in the past.

Kayaker flow needs are 40-70, 45-125, and 55-250 cumecs for beginners, intermediates, and advanced/expert kayakers, respectively. When the original WCO Environment Court process was completed, Whitewater NZ did not put a stake in the ground to protect higher flows, and it was assumed by Judge Jackson in his decision that “the Klondyke flows above 110 cumecs do not need to be controlled by the water conservation order and can be properly dealt with through a Regional Plan”. Unfortunately the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan constructed recently has no such provisions to protect our interests.

The proposed offtake of flood flows ultimately only impact on the flows used by intermediate and advanced/expert kayakers, and beginners are not affected at all. The reach is really only largely used by intermediate paddlers out of these two groups, as advanced/expert kayakers would normally seek other runs. Flows on average over a forty year flow record in the intermediate kayaker flow band ranges from 45 to 95 cumecs are not affected by the current proposal (mind you they are pretty lacking because of the high offtakes already), as only flood flows are taken. Flows from 95 to 125 cumecs are altered, with an increase of 5.6 days and decreases of 0.5, 0.6, 0.4, 0.3 and 0.1 days availability (corresponding to a 163% increase, and 17, 21, 17, 16 and 7% decreases) in the 95-100, 100-105, 105-110, 110-115, 115-120 and 120-125 cumec flow bands, respectively.

The increase in the number of days flows will be available in the 95-100 cumec flow band range is perhaps counterintuitive. Along with the decreases in all other higher intermediate flow bands it does little to improve the degraded state of the resource. Therefore, the net effect of the new proposed takes is to add insult to injury, to decrease the availability of higher river flows valued by intermediate (and advanced kayakers), but which are already very largely impacted upon by the existing current takes up to about 33 cumec takes.

Sadly the main consultation with local paddlers and Whitewater NZ on the proposal occurred right at the end of RDRML’s process to lodge consents (after all the reports had been written etc) and so we have had essentially no input on shaping what they plan. Thus the proposed White Water Course bears little resemblance to possibilities discussed with some paddlers who met with RDRML a few years ago. Whitewater NZ and local paddlers need to be involved in this consent Hearing to highlight our concerns at continued water offtake from and degradation of a river reach of value to us, which is contrary to the spirit of the CWMS to maintain or enhance existing recreational opportunities, and especially in the absence of appropriate planning provisions that should be in place before water allocations are to be made.

### **River Survey and Inventory**

A project on collecting river use and flow preference data has been quietly bubbling along and is hopefully getting close to being tested. This data is especially important for quantifying kayaker flow needs for WCO and regional plan inputs and hearings. Compiling an inventory and completing a new river use survey, 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, has been put on hold while other activities have been given priority. The work is planned to be started this coming year.

## **Other Activities and Conclusion**

There are a number of other activities bubbling along behind the scenes that we are also involved in, and when it is appropriate they will be announced.

We would like to conclude with a huge vote of thanks to all of you that have submitted or been involved in conservation efforts around the country. Rather than name people (the list is very long!), and then run the risk of missing some out, we would just like to say give yourselves a pat on the back and say thank you to you on behalf of Whitewater NZ and kayakers and river users. You know who you are. Without your efforts and voice we will all be the poorer. Keep up the great work!

## **Safety report (Shaun McCracken)**

I've been in this role for two years now. In my first twelve months we received news that Ladislav Svarc drowned on the Wairua River and that Lou Jull had drowned on the Kaituna River. In March this year, Sean Curtis drowned on the Whitcombe River. All three of these kayakers were extremely talented, they were not new to the sport. So what went wrong? And is this a trend that we as Whitewater NZ need to be addressing?

For the second year in a row I have been unsuccessful in obtaining funding from Water Safety NZ (WSNZ) for contributions to river rescue courses. This follows on from a year where the application wasn't submitted in time, so three years in total with no additional subsidy from WSNZ. WSNZ report in their follow up to my applications that whitewater kayaking / swift water rescue does not target their priority areas for drowning prevention and has limited reach to their target audience. Disappointing from our point of view. Their target areas are broadly; young kids and recreational power-boaters.

Noticeable in the last 12 months has been the increase in contact from forestry companies notifying Whitewater NZ that they are conducting their operations adjacent to sections of whitewater resource. This may be in response to Lou Jull's drowning on the Kaituna and the subsequent coroner's report. The expectation is that Whitewater NZ will then be able to reach out to all kayakers and notify them of the operation - clearly a big ask, but better than no notification. More concerning though is the action taken by a Tasman District logging operator and approved by the Regional Council. The operator was successful in applying to the Harbourmaster for a sole use permit for a section of the Motueka River. On paper, this permit closes the section of river to all other users for the sole use of the logging company for a period of several months. In practice, I am unsure how this was achieved on site / on river and how it would be enforced. But something to watch in the future.

Finally, I attended a 'Safer Boating Forum' meeting in Wellington. These meetings occur several times per year and include harbourmasters, maritime NZ, jet boat and sea kayak reps. The group were extremely supportive of Whitewater NZ involvement and indicated there may be some funding available to contribute to travel for future meetings. I was one of the few people at the meeting attending on a volunteer basis.

Looking forward I suggest there are some initiatives that could be followed up on depending on the time constraints of the Safety Officer:

- Develop a closer relationship with WSNZ and re-establish rescue course funding subsidy.
- Attend more Safer Boating Forum meetings
- Promote safety courses regardless of funding availability
- Provide more direction to clubs for their leader development / skills development
- Reach out to individuals, encouraging involvement at a club / group level.

## **Access report (James Rae and Nigel Parry)**

### **Mangahao**

Over the last nine months or so we have focussed on restoring our release rights on the Mangahao. The outcome of this work is that we secured our first release in five and half years in March 2016, which was well attended and enjoyed by many. So much so that the Ruahine club set up a BBQ and liquid refreshment outlet at the get-out, leading to a great social catch-up for the 70 or so kayakers that we estimated attended. We also have two further dates booked for September and October this year, but there is still much to do.

We need to embed some operational matters so that the release is normalised into the operating procedures of the KCE Mangahao facility, which is now owned by Trustpower.

Secondly, evidence supports the observation that we are not getting the 30 cumecs agreed for release. The lower flow leads to an increase in the pinning risk in a river that has a significant consequence in that regard when the flow is at lower levels.

We also need to work with the Regional Council to clarify some aspects of the consent around carry-forward rights when a release is cancelled.

Finally, we need to ensure that we create a balanced working relationship with KCE Mangahao whilst ensuring our rights are preserved. The slalom community rely on this relationship to ensure the continuation of the practical operation of the slalom course on the Mangorere stream.

### **Waikaremoana releases**

The double flow weekend Waikaretaheke and Piripaua releases were very well attended. The most recent release in April had groups from Hawkes Bay, Auckland University and Wellington. Genesis commented that there were more attendees than they had seen for several years.

Genesis is really keen for these releases to be well attended and there needs to be continual effort to promote them to a wider audience.

### **Tongariro Releases**

The Tongariro releases continue to be well attended. This year (2016/2017) should see the return of the Access 10 run. MPI is keen to work with Whitewater NZ to ensure that all paddlers on the river have Checked, Cleaned and Dried prior to putting on the water.

### **Kaituna Lower Gorges**

Coroner Wallace Bain held an inquest into the drowning of Lou Jull in Awesome Gorge on the Kaituna river. Matt Bennett presented to the inquest on behalf of Whitewater New Zealand. There were concerns arising from the inquest particularly regarding the Harbourmaster advocating for full closure of the all of the lower gorges.

### **Aniwhenua Canal work 2016**

During March and April this year work was scheduled on the Aniwhenua Power Station canal resulting in an extended period where dam was releasing. This meant that the section between the

dam to and the falls was running at natural levels and was kayaked by many paddlers. However there was little readily available information provided by the power company regarding the duration and expected completion of the works.

Short term, we will contact the power company to get advance notice of flow conditions and outages that would affect kayaking on the Aniwhenua (ie. scheduled outages preventing paddling on the normal kayaking section or likely releases of the upper section).

In the medium term, it would be good to push for a launching platform near the base of the Aniwhenua Power Station to prevent kayakers seal-launching directly off the station (which the power company has tried to prevent).

And in the long term, it would be good to use the success of the natural release this year to push for recreational releases at the next consent renegotiation.

### **Change Whakapapa No Take Consent**

The most recent Whakapapa No Take didn't go ahead because the flow was below the minimum 16 cumec threshold. This was also the case last year with one of the two No Takes. At present the consent allows for the following day as a backup day. However it is rare that if the flow is unable to proceed on Saturday that there will be enough rain to make the following day viable. It may be worth considering whether the following Saturday (a difference of a week) is more likely to result in successful flow requirements.

### **Communications report (Martina Naplawa)**

It's been a fairly quiet year on the Communications front with newsletters having been sent out more on a bi-monthly instead of monthly occurrence compared to the previous couple of years. This being to either no news to report, time of the year or people availability.

On the social media front, Facebook is still growing and now has over 1,800 people who have liked our page. Most are male and in the 25-34 year old age bracket. 1200 are from New Zealand and the rest a good cross section from around the world. When we break this down on a New Zealand location basis, our top 5 are; Christchurch (212), Wellington (61), Waikato (54), Rotorua (44) and Auckland (41)

Our posts can reach up to 2000 people every now and then with the most popular being related to canoe slalom.

The number of our Twitter followers has slowly risen to around 260, most of which are companies and organisations rather than individual followers.



### **Website report (Jonathan Hunt)**

The website continues to attract healthy traffic, especially to the Buy, Sell & Swap section, but most day-to-day sharing between kayakers is via Facebook at present. Whitewater NZ has funded a project to upgrade the website; this is underway, with progress slower than desirable, but results should be visible soon.

The updated website will include an API (Application Programming Interface) that should help make rivers.org.nz data on river sections available to a variety of apps. We know of several unaffiliated projects underway to record kayakers' use of rivers and it's important that Whitewater NZ is involved in these to ensure the results benefit the kayaking community and that the projects are sustainable. Please contact Jonathan at [webmaster@rivers.org.nz](mailto:webmaster@rivers.org.nz) if you want to discuss.

### **Membership report (Pete Davis)**

Individuals: 16

Associate: 1

Family: 7

Clubs: 18 including those in Grace and Extended Grace

Club numbers are higher than at this time last year but that is an outcome of the introduction of the Extended Grace status which means those clubs also count as current members.

## **Treasurer's Report – (Marnie Fornusek)**

### **Financial Performance**

This year we had a loss of \$2,678 down from last year's profit of \$10,388. Total income decreased by \$8,000 and total expenses increased by about \$5,000 resulting in the loss.

There was a decrease in General Donations; down from \$5927 to \$1650. Total annual memberships decreased by \$4,000 with a decrease in all categories. Annual subscriptions were down this year in all categories. Associate memberships decreased from \$60 to \$30, individual memberships from \$1250 to \$480, family memberships from \$150 to \$50, and club subscriptions decreased from \$9,290 to \$6190.

Interest received in the accounts is up from \$945 to \$1412 as the term deposit matured on 20 May 2015 (and reinvested for 12 months). Sales of the Whanganui River Guide were down from \$765 to \$580 this year. Sales of Whanganui River guide are generally from individuals via the website but we did have some bulk (discounted) orders from Taumaranui Visitors Centre (\$90) and Kristin School (\$210).

Conservation costs increased from \$2,067 to \$2617. Conservation costs include a fifth share of costs (with Fish & Game, Jet Boat NZ, Forest & Bird and Operation Patiki Ngati Hori) to the Catalyst Group for the Ngaruroro River. General costs for stationery, phone and internet costs related to conservation are also included. The interest expense was for an overdue account. Internet and hosting costs were up from \$1853 to 4339 as included \$2480 for work on the Rivers Website. Legal expenses of \$2615 were for issues related to the Kaituna River. Accounting and audit fees were similar to last year (\$934 compared to \$920 last year). Administration costs were nil this year as Stewart had left as Administration officer.

Bank fees are down from \$108 to \$86 which is mainly Paypal fees. General expenses were down from \$316 to \$250. General expenses were for 2015 AGM expenses and Eco conference fees. The main postage cost is for the post box rental in Wellington (\$185).

The costs for Executive travel were up from \$1490 to \$1683; (Reasons for these low costs are that that not all executive members are attend face to face meeting and also may not apply for reimbursement of their travel costs when they do attend). Travel – other was for reimbursement of travel expenses (50% up to maximum of \$200) that was available for club representatives to attend the 2015 AGM.

### **Financial Position and Movement in Equity**

There was an increase of \$4503 from \$48381 to \$52884 in the bank accounts. Accounts receivables of \$614 are a club membership and two one-fifth shares of the Ngaruroro expenses. These have all since been paid.

For current liabilities, Accounts Payable of the \$3116 include the audit expense, and the legal invoice (Kaituna) and the Catalyst Group (Ngaruroro River). All have since been paid except for audit expense.

Whitewater NZ's equity has decreased from \$52857 to \$50180 at 31 March 2016.

### **Annual Audit of Accounts**

The Year End 2016 accounts that are to be presented at the 2016 AGM have not yet been audited but the information is to be sent to Zane Colville to be audited.

## Whitewater NZ - Profit & Loss

### Profit & Loss Whitewater NZ 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

Add Summary

	31 Mar 16	31 Mar 15
<b>Income</b>		
Donations: General	1,650.00	5,926.50
Interest Income	1,412.08	944.83
<b>Advertising and Sales</b>		
Sales: Whanganui River Guide	580.00	764.50
<b>Total Advertising and Sales</b>	<b>580.00</b>	<b>764.50</b>
<b>Membership</b>		
Memberships: Associates	30.00	60.00
Memberships: Clubs	6,190.00	9,290.00
Memberships: Family	50.00	150.00
Memberships: Individuals	480.00	1,250.00
<b>Total Membership</b>	<b>6,750.00</b>	<b>10,750.00</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>10,392.08</b>	<b>18,385.83</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>10,392.08</b>	<b>18,385.83</b>
<b>Less Operating Expenses</b>		
Conservation Portfolio	2,340.20	2,066.75
Interest Expense	50.92	0.00
Internet & Hosting Charges	4,338.61	1,853.09
Legal expenses	2,614.53	0.00
<b>Administration</b>		
Accounting & Audit Fees	934.28	920.00
Admin Services	0.00	1,020.99
Bank Fees	85.77	107.68
General Expenses	250.00	316.01
Postage & Stationery	186.60	196.49
Travel - Executive	1,682.67	1,490.34

Travel - Other	586.00	0.00
<b>Total Administration</b>	<b>3,725.32</b>	<b>4,051.51</b>
<b>Publications</b>		
Whanganui River Guide Costs	0.00	26.40
<b>Total Publications</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>26.40</b>
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>13,069.58</b>	<b>7,997.75</b>
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>(2,677.50)</b>	<b>10,388.08</b>

# Balance Sheet

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## Whitewater NZ As at 31 March 2016

31 Mar 2016      31 Mar 2015

### Assets

	31 Mar 2016	31 Mar 2015
<b>Bank</b>		
Whitewater NZ Paypal	1,248	1,177
<b>Westpac Bank Accounts</b>		
Whitewater NZ Incorporated 00	6,842	3,940
Whitewater NZ Incorporated 01	244	93
Whitewater NZ Incorporated 025	6,711	6,564
Whitewater NZ Term Deposit	37,838	36,606
<b>Total Westpac Bank Accounts</b>	<b>51,635</b>	<b>47,203</b>
<b>Total Bank</b>	<b>52,884</b>	<b>48,381</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Accounts Receivable	614	5,499
Prepayments	-	185
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>5,684</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>53,498</b>	<b>54,064</b>

### Liabilities

<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
<b>Accounts Payable</b>		
Accounts Payable	3,116	630
Rounding	1	1
Unpaid Expense Claims	202	576
<b>Total Accounts Payable</b>	<b>3,318</b>	<b>1,207</b>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>3,318</b>	<b>1,207</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>3,318</b>	<b>1,207</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>50,180</b>	<b>52,857</b>

### Equity

Current Year Earnings	(2,678)	10,388
Retained Earnings	52,857	42,469
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>50,180</b>	<b>52,857</b>

