

COMMITTEE PORTFOLIO UPDATES

EAST ROTOITI SEWERAGE ON-SITE INSTALLATION

Our recent Email Newsletter and Website and Facebook updates have provided the latest information that LRCA have proactively obtained from RLC.

The first on-site systems have been installed in early December. New builds, poor performing systems and high water table sites have priority for summer installation.

Initial site visit with owner, Fulton Hogan and Council staff determines the design agreement, and work is scheduled when Building Consent is issued.

Since our most recent Email Newsletter, RLC have forwarded LRCA a new update on the sewerage scheme, and confirming there will be a community meeting on the scheme at Anniversary Weekend.

Please check this out in the Issues section of our website.

EXISTING LAKE STRUCTURE RESOURCE CONSENTS

Our recent Email Newsletter and Website and Facebook updates have provided the latest information that LRCA have proactively obtained from BoPRC.

This highlights that their consenting team have commenced working through Rotoiti consent applications.

Check the website (latest news or Issues pages) for latest information

Some structure owners have apparently NOT made application for a new consent. If you have not applied and paid the \$774 deposit fee, and need guidance, contact the consenting team (0800 8848810) or contact LRCA.

LAKWEED SPRAYING

Our recent Email Newsletter, Website and Facebook updates have provided the latest information that LRCA have proactively obtained from LINZ and Boffa Miskell.

This highlights that the recent November spraying covered a larger area than normal. Plus information about why 'dirty weed' is not sprayed.

If you are concerned about weed in your bay, please inform LRCA.

Roy Duffy

LAKE LEVELS

The Association has provided regular updates on lake level status over the course of 2021. As noted in our recent Newsletter, lake levels throughout the year have reacted to changing climatic periods with the prevailing operational consent conditions requiring Okere Gate outflows to equal or exceed inflows from Lake Rotorua invariably dictating their course. This has once again contributed to some prolonged low levels through summer and early autumn, and similarly during August.

BoPRC's Resource Consent Change Application Number CH21-02259 (65979)

This proposal was originally aired in July 2019. As previously advised, based on our subsequently negotiated understanding and expectations relative to the proposed temporary Variation, LRCA offered its **support in principle** at the RTALOLG Meeting of November 2019. This included:-

1. Maintaining water quality as the paramount consideration, i.e. Okere outflows to equal or exceed Ohau inflows.
2. Maintaining minimum flows in the Okere/Kaituna River.
3. Dispensing with the generally unattainable aspirational target percentages and maintain a preferred target range of **RL279.20m – RL279.10m** where practicable within the over-riding caveat of the input/output rule, i.e.
 - a. actively suppress levels **>RL279.20m** to minimise flooding.
 - b. carefully manage levels **<RL279.10m** to optimise navigation and boat access.The input/output regime tends to simulate more natural seasonal fluctuations.
4. Dispensing with the annual Ohau Channel 'flush' as it has not served its objective.
5. Any proposal to drop the lake level to **RL278.85m** to meet local cultural interests should be a **one-off event** only and undertaken in autumn. Joint observations to be sought from all interested parties and the results recorded for posterity in photos/video/commentary.
6. Careful planning to ensure weather conditions for any such drawdown will be reasonably forecast as dry and conditions for recovery forecast as wet.
7. These proposals to be presented for community consultation and the resulting views taken into consideration.

As many will recall, LRCA has been a leading advocate over the past three decades towards the development of lake level operating regimes that meet the expectations and practicable requirements of most lake residents and users. We can be credited for our strong influence in most of the parameters that form the basis of the current and immediate past operations which by and large have balanced the objectives of this community.

LRCA invariably endeavours to address issues by finding solutions which have wide acceptance whilst respecting the majority views of its members. Due to divergent opinions surrounding this case, the current proposal has certainly challenged those ideals. Nonetheless, in response to recent criticism from some members and others, LRCA believes it has been justified in maintaining its fundamental support having regard to the above conditions and given the following factors:-

- The Proposal for temporary variation of the existing Consent was formally presented to the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Operational Liaison Group (RTALOLG) Meeting in late 2019 after having been critically appraised by LRCA beforehand and most of our recommended amendments taken on board. From this, the intent gained unanimous approval **in principle**.
- Full details of the proposal from an LRCA perspective were produced in our Dec 2019 newsletter which was mailed to over 600 lake residents.
- A comprehensive presentation was then undertaken by Warren Webber (LRCA) and Andy Bruere (BoPRC) at our Jan 2020 AGM attended by more than 70 members and others.

The lengthy debate highlighted major concerns relating to boat access, the timing of any draw-down and accompanying ability to restore levels within an acceptable timeframe.

- Whilst certain aspects remained contentious, there was apparent general acknowledgement towards the intent of the draw-down which was to provide local iwi the opportunity to view historical sites of interest as identified in their Cultural Management Plan, and to assess the cultural, economic, social and environmental impacts first hand.
- Notably, no call was made for LRCA to amend its position or oppose the proposal.
- Subsequent March 2020 News Update sent to 400 email addresses (mostly members) invited submissions and comments to BoPRC independent consultant. The Update also highlighted our insistence that any manipulation to lower lake levels should occur at a time of least disruption to jetty owners and lake users, i.e. not before Easter.
- 18 months later (August 2021) BoPRC notified its Application to a limited number of lake users and property owners. In our view, the accompanying AEE lacked sufficient and appropriate detail and obscured the crucial caveats that were essentially accepted as part of the earlier negotiated community expectations fostered by LRCA. This has clearly affected some of the past goodwill towards the primary intent. LRCA has made specific reference to these shortcomings in its latest submission.
- Notwithstanding, providing the draw-down is undertaken in a responsible manner, and at an appropriate (least disruptive and weather-permitting) time, it is evident that more than half of the objectors to the current Application are willing to accommodate the desire of a significant section of the community to make specific observations at a low lake level on condition that evaluation of how such levels would likely impact on other stakeholders is undertaken simultaneously.
- Assurances have been given that lake level management would revert back to standard operations ASAP following completion of the 7-day draw-down, and that any new proposals ensuing from the assessment will be subject to normal and separate resource consent requirements.
- It is reiterated that the annual Ohau Channel 'flush' along with the generally unattainable aspirational target levels will be removed from future operational conditions. This will allow lake levels in the foreseeable future (apart from the one-off proposed draw-down) to be essentially controlled by prioritising the Okere outflow > Ohau inflow principle, and maintaining the lake within the range of **RL279.20m to RL 279.10m** whenever practicable.

Jim Stanton

COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW

Printed Newsletter

This is the second of our magazine-style printed newsletter being sent out annually (rather than bi-annually). It is posted to members just before Christmas. Copies are also left in lakeside stores. You can also read it on our Facebook page and website during 2022.

Facebook

We have continued to grow our Facebook audience through 2021. It is now our largest audience with almost 750 people following us. We post regularly about issues affecting the lake – lake levels, pest management, refuse updates, lake quality, council matters and any issue that affects our community.

Interestingly, our most popular post of the year was some pictures at the premiere of the movie *Cousins* at Tapuaeharuru Marae in February, which reached 4734 people. This was due to many people liking, sharing and commenting on the post which meant it was seen by many more people than those who follow us. Our other 'most seen' post was a paid one we did in September for our survey which reached 5014 people. For this paid campaign we targeted people who reside around Rotoiti and those with interests that indicate they may use the lake (such as "fishing", "boating"). We did this to try and target people within the Rotoiti community who *are not* current members.

If you are not already following us, you can find us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/lakerotoiticommunityassn>

Email Newsletters

In 2021 we sent 12 emails – 5 were Email Newsletters and the others were targeted emails about specific issues such as Lake Levels and the SH30 speed review. Our average open rate for an email is 62.1%. This is higher than the industry average of 40.1%, but indicates that there are still a number of people not opening these and therefore missing out on this important information. In our survey 69.1% of people said it was the preferred form of communication.

Our email database now has 410 members. If you are not already receiving our emails, please email lrc@rotoiti.co.nz and ask us to add you. You do not have to be a paid member to receive these emails and multiple people in your household or whānau can receive them. They give a lot of important information about the issues affecting our lake.

Website

The goal of our website www.rotoiti.co.nz is for it to be the easiest place to go for the background and latest information on the key issues and interests of our Rotoiti community. Its use has increased by over 400% since we resurrected it. It now receives around 600 visits per month.

The most popular pages are our Home page, Latest News page, the Issues pages for: Sewerage, Lake Structures, Lake Levels and SH30 Speed Review, and the Things to Do page.

There is plenty going on with over 70 Latest News posts in the last 12 months. It's worth scrolling back through the updates as they cover a wide range of important topics for our community.

Also, make sure you visit our membership page to join or renew your LRCA membership and help us build a more informed and connected community.

Survey

- We wanted to connect with the Rotoiti community to gain better understanding of the issues people find important.
- We wanted to reach a larger audience than our current paid members.
- We promoted this survey via email (to 235 recipients), via a paid Facebook campaign (that reached 5014 people within a 40km radius of Rotoiti) and to various community groups such as the Rotoiti Sports Club, local iwi and Classic & Wooden Boats Society. We also sent it to people within the committees 'own networks.
- The survey was open for 5 weeks.
- We had 138 responses.
- There was an overwhelming response that the committee are on the right track, particularly with the major issues of importance and our communications
- There is more opportunity to connect with organisations around the lake and support them in their initiatives
- There are opportunities to work alongside environmental agencies and volunteer groups – i.e., pest control, tree planting, beach clean ups
- There is further work needed to communicate what we actually do, as many of the suggestions are outside our scope but are things we need to be across. In future communications, and in our constitution, there is a need for clarity around the LRCA's obligations, objectives and functions. (81% of respondents said they do not really know what we do)
- There is an interest for more community integration – māori and pākeha, holiday homers and permanent residents
- There is plenty of scope to increase our financial membership (58% of respondents were not members)

You can read the results of our survey on our website.

Sherilyn Coney, Annamarie Jensen, Tom Macky

WAKA KOTAHI SH30 SPEED REVIEW

Between 2010 and 2019, 10 people died and 73 were seriously injured on SH30 between Tikitere and Whakatane. Changes urgently need to be made to reduce the steadily increasing number of accidents.

The speed review started with public consultation in June 2021. Since then 1 local has been killed at Rotoiti and another at Rotoma!

The review received wide attention from locals with over 100 formally submitting their support and comments on our submission - for speed limits to be reviewed between Moose Lodge and Hinehopu.

Waka Kotahi reviewed the public submissions and produced their Engagement Report late September.

Their safety engineers have moved quickly to technically assess safe speeds for the corridor and prepare their recommended changes for planned public presentation mid January and formal public consultation in the following 4 weeks.

Following this review their final decision is notified and the new speed limits are introduced.

This is a rare opportunity for our community to influence road safety where it effects them. LRCA will do our best to facilitate this process by making you aware of the new proposed speeds, alerting you to the community feedback consultation opportunities and making our own submissions.

Looking forward to safer roads for our community - LRCA.

Tom Macky