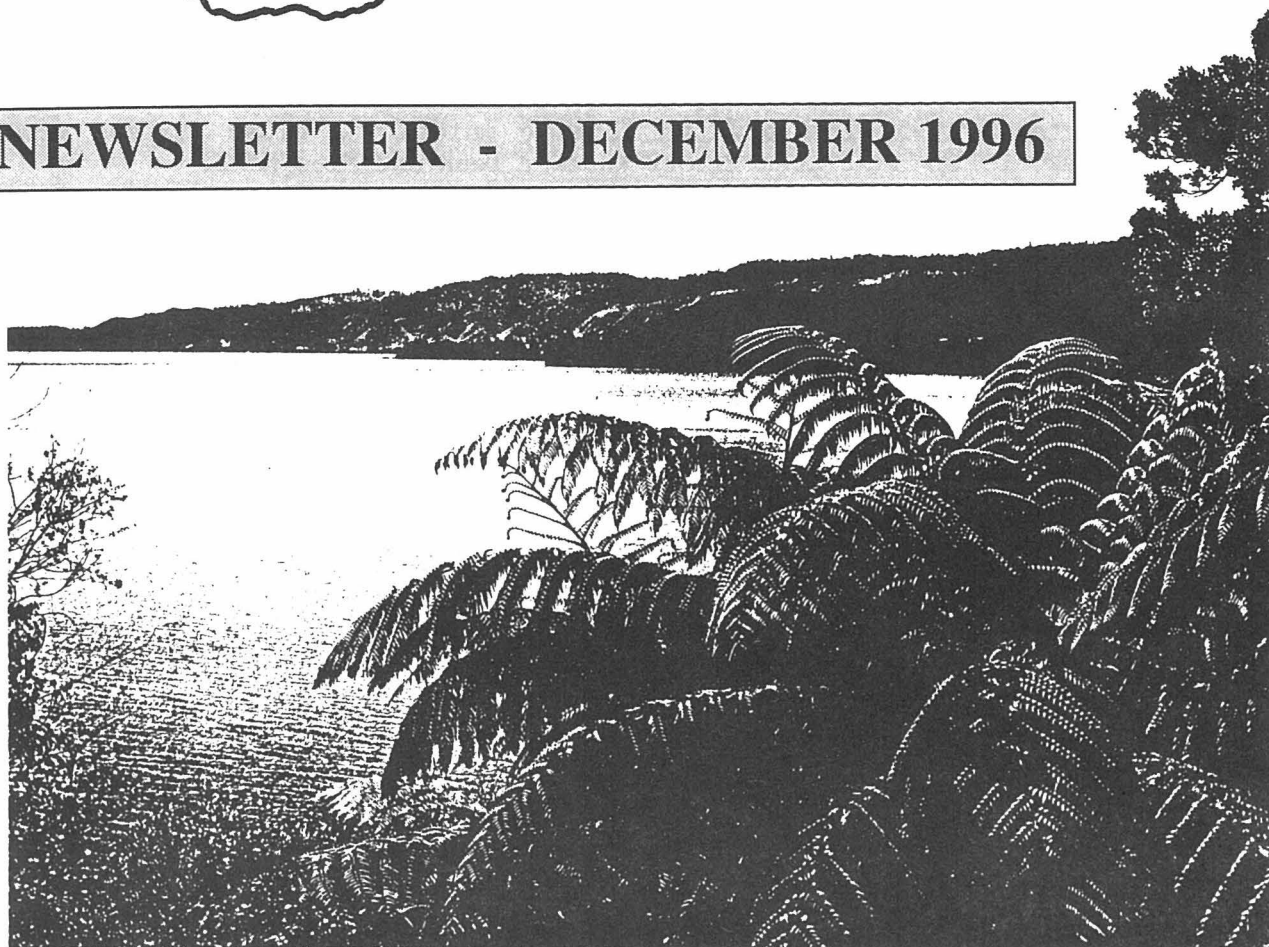




Lake Rotoiti Ratepayers & Residents Association

NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 1996



Kia Ora Greetings from the Lake

Another busy year is almost over. Looking ahead, we will be pursuing issues currently in progress, seeking further resources to maintain and improve our community, and meeting new challenges and demands upon our ecological well-being. We wish to remind everyone that the **Annual General Meeting** of the Association will be held at the Okawa Bay Lake Resort on Sunday 12 January 1997. Some format changes are intended to reduce the duration of the meeting. We ask that you support us with your attendance. Better still, if you are willing and able to offer your time to committee matters, your nomination would be most welcome.

Our special thanks to all those who have supported and assisted us throughout the year, in particular our subscribers and advertisers whose contributions have been invaluable towards producing Newsletters and general administration. We also wish to acknowledge the co-operation and expertise of our printers at the Waiariki Polytech headed by former local resident, Alan Moore. Recently, a sponsorship deal has been struck with Placemakers Rotorua Branch to become our major advertiser. Franchise holders, Mike and Lenore McVicar are well known to many in the area and have made some noticeable changes in enhancing the company profile. They would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss your needs. Finally, the committee extends its best wishes to each and everyone for the coming festive season and hope you enjoy a prosperous 1997.

Chairman:
Jim Stanton
Tel: 362 4690

Secretary:
Mary Stanton
Tel: 362 4690

All Mail: PO Mourea
C/- Happy Angler Store
Rotorua

Fax: 362 4876

ROTORUA DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

We take this opportunity to congratulate Steve Chadwick on her success in Rotorua District Council's North Ward by-election earlier this year. That she won by a significant margin was perhaps a vindication of our stance in proposing her direct appointment as the highest polling unsuccessful candidate from the October 1995 election. We look to maintain a close liaison with both Steve and fellow Ward Councillors Knocker Dean and Mita Mohi.

One of the major challenges for the Rotorua District over the next year will be the development of a 15 year strategic plan which aims to reflect an achievable and affordable community vision as we move to the next century. Initial consultation will comprise of several 'focus groups' made up of widely representative members of the community who will help to identify where we are now and perceptions for the future. A number of our local residents have been co-opted onto these groups. On completion of this first stage, a Draft Strategic Plan will be produced and presented for wider feedback followed by an extensive public survey prior to finalisation.

Our submissions to Rotorua District Council's Annual Plan for 1996-97 met with some shift in emphasis. The overall rates increase for this year has been adjusted downwards which should allow most rural residential increases to not exceed 3.7 percent. An additional \$60,000 has been allocated to rural street improvements (footpathing, kerb and channel and some street lighting). Our comments on the Draft Rural Footpath, Kerb and Channel Policy will give some guidance on priorities which are currently being assessed. A review in conjunction with Trustpower is now underway to identify areas of priority for street lighting. The anticipated statutory processes to obtain Resource Consents and conclude design work for any proposed sewerage of lakeside settlements is likely to take up to three years regardless of priorities. Funding is available to progress a water supply for Mourea and/or other West Rotoiti areas if and when sufficient community support exists.

Another matter afforded greater urgency in response to Annual Plan submissions is the development of a Lakes Management Strategy. The process commenced in August with the strategy to be conjointly driven by Rotorua District Council, Environment BOP and Te Arawa Trust Board. As principals in the management role, they will aim to identify common agreed objectives and goals for the Rotorua lakes. This is still ongoing and the timeframe for reaching agreement is at present unclear. Stage two will involve wide public consultation with community group representation forming part of the Rotorua Lakes Liaison Group which will provide the forum for submissions from other interested parties. It should be noted that the result of this undertaking will also impact on the Rotorua District Plan which is currently in limbo awaiting review of submissions by the Environment Court relating in part to the lack of specific controls for the lakes environment. We will be watching progress closely.

A proposal by Council to demolish the present Toilet Block at Rotoiti Delta and replace it with a newer and larger complex incorporating latest environmentally friendly technology is currently in limbo due to uncertainties over land tenure. This is subject to ongoing negotiation with the owners of the adjoining Block in an attempt to resolve the matter.

Our relationship with Councillors and Council Officers from both RDC and their regional counterpart, Environment BOP has for the most part been very satisfying and beneficial in terms of communication and consultation. We believe that we have established ourselves as a well recognised link in the community where our views are sought on a wide range of proposals and issues. We always strive to recommend what we believe to be majority opinion and best from the local community point of view. Obviously the more input and support we receive from individual residents and ratepayers, the easier the task becomes. If you have any concerns or comment, please feel free to contact the committee or write to us at the address shown on the cover page.

The problem of the open drain bordering the Pikiaro Rugby League Club ground and properties in Waana/Takinga Streets has recently attracted some Council maintenance funding. Over the years, the water level in the Ohau Channel has risen above the level of the drain invert thereby prohibiting the flow. The drain has now been regraded by filling the invert to allow the water to flow through the Takinga Street culvert. Time will hail its success or otherwise.

Residents in Ngareta Street will unfortunately have to wait for any long term improvement to surface drainage. Following the upgrade of SH33 through Mourea two catchpits were installed to alleviate property flooding and berm puddles filled in. This has been repeated recently. However, this can only be a temporary measure until such time as kerb and channel is approved. Priority schedules for this type of work are currently being finalised.

Council is presently preparing the Rotorua Rural Reserves Draft Management Plan which is intended to incorporate general policy for rural Reserves into one document rather than individually as in the past. Recent public meetings have been held including one at Okawa Bay Lake Resort to discuss guidelines. Following this, we have made a number of recommendations for inclusion in the Draft which will be made available for public submissions.

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One of the most significant decisions handed down by the Rotorua District Council in recent times is the approval for the Crater Lake Hotel complex. This large Country Club type development to be constructed in the hills midway between Lakes Okareka and Tarawera is strongly opposed by both local Ratepayer Associations and even by Council's own professional Planning Department. The main opposition centres around the marked effect on the rural character of the area and the impact of greatly increased traffic movement within confined roading systems. The political decision to proceed perhaps demonstrates the growing differences in emphasis in considering tourist orientated proposals for large scale developments in the rural lakes sector. Both Tarawera and Okareka residents are planning an appeal to the Environment Court.

The latest triennial Government property valuations are due out shortly. It is rumoured that some areas can expect a significant increase which in turn will have a corresponding effect on next years rates. Remember, if you disagree with your valuation for any reason, you should firstly discuss it with the local Valuation NZ office. If still not satisfied, you will need to object in writing upon which the District Valuer will decide whether any changes should be made. Any further disagreement is then referred to the Land Valuation Tribunal appointed by the Government whose decision can only be challenged through litigation.

Several years ago, Tasman Forestry undertook to provide resources to cleaning up the hillside above Okawa Bay Road as part of a venture to eventually eradicate the thick gorse which is not only an eyesore but a potential fire risk. The project did not proceed for various reasons but later, part of the area was cleared by a mechanical cutter. Unfortunately there was little follow up action and the gorse is regenerating. However, their successors, Fletcher Challenge Forests have recently advised local residents that they will be working on the problem again. They intend to spray the area, probably with Glyso-phate (Roundup G2), firstly by hand application within 20-30 metres of the perimeter and secondly by aerial application to the remainder. Because of the proximity of the block to residences, close management will be necessary which will involve the use of devices such as Global Positioning Systems to record the exact position of aerial application, and smoke flares for detecting air movement. The ultimate goal is to remove the gorse and return the land to grass for the owners.

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ELECTRICITY AND TRUSTPOWER

Combined Lakes Ratepayers Association of which we are an affiliated member continue to monitor Trustpower's performance on behalf of lakes consumers. CLRA members attended a meeting with the Rotorua Energy Charitable Trust in October to discuss issues of concern regarding service and responsibilities to the community. This followed an admission by the sole Rotorua Director on Trustpower's Board, Joe La Grouw, that he would have some difficulty in representing the interests of both shareholders and consumers. In the light of this, CLRA proposed that the Energy Trust provide funding to set up a Rotorua Consumers Association which could directly represent consumers. This failed to gain acceptance with the Trust advising that legal opinion decreed that it fell outside their charter. A suggestion by Chairman, John Lepper, regarding the possibility of setting up a local ombudsman to deal with complaints also met with mixed reaction. CLRA is at present pursuing investigations into the legal aspects of the ability of the Trust to fund a Consumers Association. Notwithstanding, we are happy to note that there has been a considerable improvement in Trustpower's service to the District for which CLRA and Federated Farmers groups can take a great deal of credit.

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THE WEST ROTOITI NEWS

Many people will recall the fascinating and informative publication, 'The West Rotoiti News' a compilation of wide ranging topics and local issues by a dedicated group of editorial and contributing volunteers from within our community. The first issue was produced in December 1983. Regretfully, it came to a premature demise during 1988 when the time and effort of those involved could not be sustained. Since then, attempts to revive it have so far been unsuccessful. Recently, the accumulated proceeds from this News magazine, which amounted to a substantial sum, were dispersed equally between this Association and the Rotorua Community Hospice. We are sincerely grateful for this most generous donation and wish to acknowledge the work and skills of each and everyone associated with 'The West Rotoiti News'. In accordance with the wishes of the donors, these monies will be held in account to assist in the publication and distribution of community news letters. We have continued to provide smaller type Newsletters, but we too lack all of the resources necessary to produce a full-scale magazine of the same stature although we are sure it would be enthusiastically received. We know that there must be many out there who possess the skill and capability. If anyone has the time and energy to devote to such an undertaking, we could certainly offer a great deal of assistance.

FISHING REPORT

Generally a good start to the season but over the last four weeks or so, Rotoiti has been up to its old tricks with patchy results over most of the lake apart from some exceptions for those lucky or persistent enough to strike the right spot. The Delta has been one of the most consistent areas to a Dark Purple or Clown fly. Probably, through December, the large schools in the Delta will start to move down the lake to deeper, cooler water.

An experienced guide, who normally fishes Lake Rotorua, was surprised to net two medium sized browns off the Hot Pools recently. Brown trout east of the Power Lines are extremely rare but they are occasionally caught around the Delta. A nine-pounder was landed off the channel bouy in the second week of the new season.

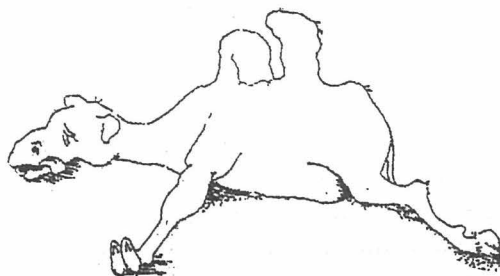
ROTOITI - Top Lake!! Interesting statistics recently published by Eastern Region Fish and Game Council show that their 'big fish' programme has resulted in over 650 'ten pound plus' trout being caught during the past three years. Seventy percent of these were from Rotoiti.

Really sad to read of a 40 foot gill net found recently in the Ohau Channel. Netting here has been a problem in the past and this confirms that it still goes on. It is up to everyone who has a love for the sport in Rotorua and Rotoiti to report any suspicious activity relating to netting to ERFGC, Phone (07)357-5501.

Is the traditional three-month closure of Lake Rotoiti really necessary or is it just an anachronism that has carried on from the old days? There is a strong feeling amongst local residents that Rotoiti should be open for trolling all year round and petitions to ERFGC to this effect are about to be mounted. With the great ability of the hatchery to re-stock the lake and with fly fishing permitted around most of the lake for the whole year, it is pretty hard to find a valid reason why the lake should now close at all for trolling. One old lag thinks that the only reason the lake closes is because 'out of town' fishing enthusiasts don't want to miss out on their traditional opening and closing parties. A more serious argument for a re-think is the commercial return that is lost to Rotorua from fishing folk travelling on to Taupo during our off season.

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KAITUNA RIVER MANAGEMENT

Since our last Newsletter, there has been only slow progress in attempts to finalise a management strategy for commercial rafting activities on the Kaituna River. It is believed that a recent meeting between DOC, Rotoiti Scenic Reserves Board and Rafting Company representatives resolved outstanding issues in respect of licensing proposals. We understand that six companies are presently negotiating contracts which will confine hours of operation to between 9.00am - 4.00pm from 1 April - 30 September and 9.00am - 5.00pm from 1 October - 31 March. A recess would be observed during the month of June to coincide with the trout spawning season. Revenue collected is to be utilised for the upkeep and maintenance of local Reserves administered by the Board along with associated projects.

A separate deal to levy companies using privately owned land bordering SH33 at the Okere access point has yet to reach agreement. Rafting operators have used this area for a number of years at no cost. However, the owners, Okere 1B Incorporation have recently fenced the boundaries pending resolution. Our concerns regarding the proximity of this access point to a potentially lethal corner on the State Highway remain. We have written to Rotorua District Council again on this matter.

We are also seeking intervention to remedy the unsatisfactory situation at the Trout Pool Recreation Reserve which is now being used by the commercial rafting fraternity in a manner similar to which they formerly used the Okere Falls Reserve car park. Because the Reserve is also used for egress, we have suggested that the practical solution seems to be to extend the usable space to create a separate area for rafting activities thereby leaving an unimpeded portion for traditional passive recreationalists and other visitors. Furthermore, if this is to become a permanent base, Council will need to seriously consider improving the carriageway along the narrow Trout Pool Road to offset the increased traffic movement.

As we have said before, the position of most residents and ratepayers and probably most visitors is that the use of the Kaituna River for commercial rafting is accepted providing that appropriate management policies are in place to protect the community, environment and interests of other users.

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LAKEWEED CONTROL

Once again the responsibility for lakeweed spraying is in doubt. Lakes residents attending the recent AGM of the Lakeweed Society thought that they were in some sort of 'time warp' as they listened to a senior DOC Officer, Kim Young explain that, whilst DOC will do the job this year, it might not be contracted to do it in the future.

It took us back some 8 years when we had to fight long and hard to ensure that the spraying programmes continued. Since then, DOC have done a fine job but the Resource Management Act has given birth to some new designations in Government Departments with mysterious names such as DOSLI (Department of Survey and Lands Information) and NIWA (National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research) who now apparently have been tasked with aquatic weed control.

We've heard it all before - where lakeweed spraying has been kicked around amongst Government and Local authorities. At least this time, our local community organisations can be quick off the mark in chasing those responsible to sort it out before the 1997 spray season. In the meantime, DOC will be spraying Rotoiti over the next four weeks. We believe that DOC should be the agency to supervise the work in future.

.....

It would appear that the demise of the dreaded aquatic weed, *Hydrodictyon Reticulatum* (Water Net) on Lake Rotoiti is almost complete. Only a few very small patches remain. When it hit us about five years ago, it covered vast areas of shoreline, ruined shallow water fishing, and looked and smelled dreadful. Some opinions then had it that water net was cyclical and would only have about a five year impact - but could come back later.

Probably though, the real reason water net has gone is that the \$30 million Rotorua Sewerage Treatment Plant now pumps its treated effluent up to spray the Whakarewarewa Forest, thus reducing lake nutrients. When the plant opened several years ago, we were told that it could be up to seven years before any significant change to the lake water quality would be noticed - but in fact it took only seven weeks to see the improvement weed-wise. Rotoiti is now the best it has been for many years. However, this is no reason for complacency and general weed control must continue.

Mobile Library Calendar

Tuesday Route 1997

9.00 - 9.45am	Rotokawa School
10.15 - 10.35am	Rotoiti Store
10.40 - 11.00am	Te Kura o Rotoiti
11.15 - 11.35am	Rotoma School
11.40 - 12 noon	Merge Lodge, Rotoma
1.00 - 1.30pm	Okere Falls/School
1.45 - 2.30pm	Hamurana Store
3.00 - 3.20pm	Mamaku School
3.25 - 3.45pm	Mamaku Store

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WATER SUPPLY UPDATE

Our efforts to make contact with all property owners to establish their support for a reticulated water supply, in response to the numerous requests from the community, has now reached a stage where sufficient replies in the affirmative have been received from a substantial area in Mourea (bounded by the Okawa Bay Lake Resort east to the Rotoiti Delta but excluding most of Hamurana Road) to enable an approach to the Rotorua District Council to proceed with further investigations. There are still a significant number of owners whom we have been unable to contact. We will again seek their response via this Newsletter. Some have said yes pending more positive costing information. Those who do not support a scheme must also be acknowledged. We will arrange with Council to hold further meetings as required prior to a final decision being made. Surveys of the Okere, Otaramarae and Te Ngae Junction areas are still far from completion. The lack of volunteer assistance has meant only slow progress in these areas.

JET SKIS

Many of us will remember the advent of trail bikes and the associated noise, inconsiderate use, and disregard for safety until the relevant authorities acted to define areas where they could operate without impinging on the rights of others. A similar situation is beginning to emerge with the increasing number of jetskis now starting to appear on the lake, more so over the summer holiday period. Like trail bikes, whilst they provide considerable enjoyment to their users, they can also cause a great deal of concern and annoyance through inconsiderate and injudicious actions. The District Council are in the process of establishing an area on Lake Rotoma to confine jetskiers away from the residential areas. It may be appropriate to seek similar controls in parts of Lake Rotoiti. In the meantime, we would remind jetskiers that they are subject to the Lake Waters by-laws in the same way as other craft and ask that they exercise safety and display consideration for fellow users of the lake and its foreshore areas.

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BLUEPRINT

The recent shooting of two cows on forest land near Mourea and the theft of the carcasses has caused concern amongst the community.

Farmers are well aware of the vulnerability of their stock to the threat of dog attacks and thefts of this nature, and rely considerably on people within the community to report suspicious activity. The owner in this instance kept a small herd of eight. The fact that they all had names indicates that they were like pets, and given that one of the cows was in calf makes it even harder to understand why someone would kill the animals.

Publicity has drawn some response from vigilant people in the locality and so I am hoping it won't be too long before the thieves are caught. Warnings must go out to those who are offered free or cheap meat. You should report this to the Police. If you don't, you're just as guilty as the thieves and I hope you all choke!

Landowners must now be alert to other suspicious activity on their properties and report this too. Cannabis growers will be moving into bush covered areas to replant their seedlings, close to water supplies, and in an area which gets maximum sunlight. Plantations are often guarded so we don't recommend that you investigate the activity but simply observe and report the details. We will do the rest which could mean removing the plants and/or carrying out our own observations. Generally, people do report suspicious activity, but there are those who don't until they learn that something has happened. The best time to tell us is immediately.

Since my previous article in May, only one Neighbourhood Support Group has developed, this being in Mourea. Whilst many residents apply the basic principles, it would be more beneficial to be recognised as a member of a N.S.G. If you need more information, please call this office on Ph 345-3453.

George ANARU
Community Constable
Te Ngae CPC

SMALL COMMUNITY SEWERAGE SCHEMES

This Association has for a number of years pursued the issue of sewerage reticulation schemes for various areas around Lake Rotoiti. Problem areas for septic tank disposal due to low lying land and high ground water levels have been identified in Mourea, Okawa Bay, Hinehopu and Gisborne Point. Apart from inconvenience and public health safety, there have also been concerns over the nutrient input to the lakes. In 1995, Rotorua District Council resolved to prepare feasibility reports on the sewerage of 13 small communities within the Rotorua District. These investigations have now been completed by the Consultant group, Pattle Delamore Partners who have provided specific reports on each community along with costed options for sewerage reticulation. These have recently been released for public information.

Council policy is to fund the capital expenditure to establish community sewage schemes 100 percent from General Rates. All service connections to properties and ongoing operating and maintenance costs are a charge to properties within the area to be serviced. Provision of any scheme will be determined by over-riding necessity for public health or environmental reasons or through community demand. Because of the high capital costs involved, there would be a need to establish where funding requirements fit into short and long term Council strategy. We have been advised that even if a scheme was approved in the near future, implementation is likely to be at least 3 years away.

Current designated priorities and costings by area are:-

<u>Community</u>	<u>Capital Cost</u>	<u>Annual Cost</u>
2. Mourea	\$799,200	\$27,000
5. Okere Falls	\$818,800	\$35,400
7. Otaramarae	\$200,200	\$10,000
9. Hinehopu	\$627,500	\$26,600
11. Gisborne Point	\$568,700	\$23,400

The next stage is community consultation which will be done in order of priority unless a combined scheme is an alternative option. The first communities to be consulted are Parekarangi and Reporoa (end of November 1996) followed by Mourea, Otaramarae and Okere Falls together (early 1997). The outcome of these meetings will largely determine further progress.

In the meantime, Environment BOP has taken regulatory steps to effect a managed septic tank cleaning programme through its shortly to be implemented **Regional On-Site Effluent Plan**. The intent of this is to control the impact of septic tank discharge on the environment, especially the amount of nutrient reaching lakes and rivers and other water sources. Once implemented, it will require all property owners to undergo a regular maintenance programme including content removal and inspection of structures and drainage fields. Any systems found to be not up to certain standards would require to be repaired or replaced. The method by which this would be carried out is to be determined by each District Council depending on circumstances. An amendment to the original proposal identified areas including Mourea, Okawa Bay, Gisborne Point and Hinehopu as requiring inspections to be carried out every 3 years or become subject to a discretionary consent application to continue operating.

Whilst supporting this Plan in principle, we were concerned over two matters which we addressed to a recent Environment Court sitting. Firstly, we pointed out that a significant percentage of properties around Lake Rotoiti are not occupied on a permanent basis whilst others have a low occupancy rate. We suggested that these properties may not warrant such a stringent inspection programme with associated costs. We contended that once the structural integrity and operation of the tank was established at the initial inspection, the frequency of future inspections could be based on prevailing circumstances. Secondly, we believed that the Plan should provide for clear recognition of impending reticulation schemes aimed at particular communities when making decisions on assessments of individual systems. It was noted that property owners could incur costs in excess of \$2,000 to replace their septic tanks and disposal fields. We were successful in having an additional clause inserted to cover this latter concern whilst we were given some assurance that inspections subsequent to the initial survey would be based on existing circumstances to minimise costs to owners.

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NEW BOAT MARINA?

The Trustees of the large Rotoiti 1B land Block around Otaramarae are floating an idea to develop a boat marina in Te Tii Bay off Whangamoa Drive. Inquiries and expressions of interest are currently being sought via Public Notices in the local media through the office of Martin McCaulay Morton Ltd. Proposals for a high standard facility include upgraded entry from the end of Whangamoa Drive, launching ramp, adequate car and trailer parking, security compound with hard standing area, lockup building for boats, trailers, motors etc, a fuel depot, moorings to minimum depth of 1.5 to 2.0 metres and wharfage for boats up to 30 foot length. If sufficient interest is shown, the project would proceed to the costing stage followed by Resource Consent applications which would obviously have to take into account any environmental concerns. Further information can be obtained from Luke Martin Ph (07)347-7840.

You may recall our efforts over the last few years in addressing the concerns of local residents and fishing enthusiasts over the use of the Ohau Channel by the large tourist catamaran, Scat Cat. Although a number of reports put out by Environment BOP and Eastern Region Fish and Game Council indicated that this vessel was causing environmental damage within the Channel area, nothing has yet been done to allay these concerns. Recently, Rotorua District Council granted a licence to a jet boat operator to conduct tours from the Rotorua Lakefront through the Ohau Channel into Lake Rotoiti with the aim of linking up with white water rafting trips at Okere. This includes a proposal to build a 20-seater craft for the journey. Whilst there is currently no restriction on the size of craft using the channel, we believe that any proliferation of such vessels may compromise safety and environmental factors.

It has been reported that figures released by Rotorua Police show that the worst area for speeding vehicles is in the vicinity of Rotoiti School where officially, 21 vehicles per 1,000 have been caught by the camera exceeding the limit. A number of concerns have been raised about vehicle speed on SH30 through Rotoiti. We are pleased to note that an application has been made to the Land Transport Safety Authority to standardise the speed limit between Gisborne Point and Hinehopu to 70kph. It has been requested that the road through Ruato Bay be afforded similar protection.

POWER GENERATION

The pressure by Power companies throughout the region to further exploit local resources for increased generation is hotting up. We have already mentioned the Resource Consent approval to allow Bay Energy (Trustpower) to carry out investigative drilling of the Taheke geothermal field. This has not yet commenced due apparently to 'current economic conditions'. Notwithstanding, a further proposal by Power NZ in conjunction with Trustpower to utilise the Taheke resource was discussed at a public meeting in July. At this meeting, the Trustee for Tikitere Holdings Ltd who operate the facility at Hell's Gate expressed very strong opposition to the proposals on the ground that there was no conclusive evidence that drilling and extraction from Taheke would not significantly affect the Tikitere field. To date, no additional applications for Resource consent have yet been lodged.

During discussions relating to lake level consents, we learnt that Whakatane based BOP Electricity was proposing to submit an application to utilise the Kaituna River below the Trout Pool for hydro-electricity generation. An investigation of the river bed characteristics is to be undertaken shortly in conjunction with an inspection of the Okere Control Gates structure by Environment BOP. This will involve opening and closing the gates over a 36-48 hour period and would comply with the currently proposed lake level consent conditions. However, there has been a delay due to the necessity to accommodate water intake requirements at the AFFCO factory further down the Kaituna at Rangiora.

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LAKE LEVELS MANAGEMENT

It will be recalled that earlier in the year, Environment BOP notified its intention to reassess the way in which the levels of lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti were to be managed. Several submissions including our own have resulted in two pre-hearings of quite intense debate and further negotiations to try and reach a compromise over residual concerns. The outcome has shown the value of close consultation and co-operation between the controlling body and those likely to be most affected. Tribute is due particularly to our intrepid committee member, Michael Gill, whose thorough and persistent investigations were significant in securing consent conditions which now meet most of our concerns. This should eliminate much of the previous discontent brought about largely by a lack of understanding and response to the many issues involved. There will, of course, still be times when the agreed target levels are compromised by extreme weather fluctuations. However, better monitoring should bring matters under control at the earliest opportunity.

With **Lake Rotorua**, there was little dissent over the management of levels in the past. Therefore, no changes are proposed to the existing control of the stoplogs at the Ohau Channel weir. Ongoing concern was expressed over the inability of smelt and other small fish to negotiate the weir into Lake Rotorua mainly due to the fast water flows. As a result, scientific staff are designing a modified fish pass from fibreglass which will be installed on the downstream side of the control structure to assist their passage.

Concerns over the fluctuating levels of **Lake Rotoiti** have been forthcoming ever since the control gates were installed at Okere Falls in 1982. Levels were considered to be too high or too low depending on personal circumstances. Legally, Environment BOP were bound to control the level within a 0.55 metre range, but were actually managing it within a 0.25 metre range most of the time. Not a very large variation you might say, but it did cause adverse effects. Holding the levels for prolonged periods at the extremities resulted in vegetation being destroyed when it was high advancing erosion and causing flooding to low lying property. When it was low, problems were experienced in accessing jetties and exposure to navigational hazards.

The new consent conditions will see the maximum and minimum levels remain as they are. However, revised **target levels** have been set at 279.150 ± 0.075 metres being a level relative to what is known as the 'Moturiki Datum'. This means that the level will be controlled as close to 279.150 as practicable

without requiring continuous gate adjustment for minor level changes. The relatively small variance of 0.075m (3 inches) requires that the gates be opened fully after heavy rain to allow the target level to be regained as quickly as possible. During drought conditions, the three gates will be closed to (2 x 100mm and 1 x 200mm) until weather relief, this being the minimum water required to maintain the flow down the Kaituna River.

These new controls were agreed to after many hours of monitoring, recording, observing and investigating individual complaints over the course of the year and lengthy intervening discussions within committee and with residents and Environment BOP. Temporary gauges (to become permanent) installed at Hinehopu Gisborne Point, Okawa Bay and Okere proved vital aids to these investigations. A successful trial of the new methodology was carried out between 6th and 23rd September when very heavy rain and flooding was experienced throughout the District. The three gates were opened to 1200mm each (the maximum flow rate possible down the Okere arm). During this period there was no reported flooding further down the Kaituna River and no evidence or reports of flooding or erosion around the shores of Lake Rotoiti.

During the course of investigation, it has been revealed that the NIWA tower which records the lake level at the Okere outlet has been providing inaccurate data with errors of up to 90mm depending on the amount of drawdown effect in the Okere arm when the gates are opened. This has no doubt been the prime factor in disputes between Environment BOP engineers and local residents in the past. Currently, allowance is made for the error when calculating levels. Consideration is being given to relocating the tower in the not too distant future and when funding permits.

The wind gauge at Hinehopu has provided information which confirms that when strong westerly winds prevail, there is a significant rise in the lake level at the eastern end. However, generally the difference is less than 4mm on average between the two opposing ends of the lake. Automation of the Control Gates at Okere has been the subject of much debate. Our view has been that it would seem justifiable to eliminate the uncertainties of manual control given the agreed emphasis on maintaining close target levels. Nonetheless, manual operation will remain until it can be proved to be ineffective.

A survey is to be carried out within 12 months to verify the absolute level of Lake Rotoiti and ascertain any changes in lake or land levels since the previous like survey. Within 12-18 months, a review of operations will be undertaken to determine whether any changes should be made to the agreed target level or operational range. This will depend to a large extent on comments and/or complaints received from users and residents up until that time. **It is important that if you have any concerns, you address them to Matthew Surman at Environment BOP, P.O. Box 364, Whakatane or Free-phone (0800)368-267.** Further information can also be obtained from Michael Gill or other Association committee members.



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= Ernie Cordwell	Okere Road	Ph 3624748
= Dan Arrowsmith	Okere Road	Ph 3624477
= Theo de Lange	Otaramarae	Ph 3624342
= Michael Gill	Okawa Bay	Ph 3624589
= Bill Kingi	Parcliffe	Ph 3457186
= Tai Eru Morehu	Maniatutu Road	Ph 3624392
= Joan Piesse	Gisborne Point	Ph 3627755
= Theo Tait	Hinehopu	Ph 3627641
= Fred Whata	Okere Falls	Ph 3624842

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LAKE ROTOITI

