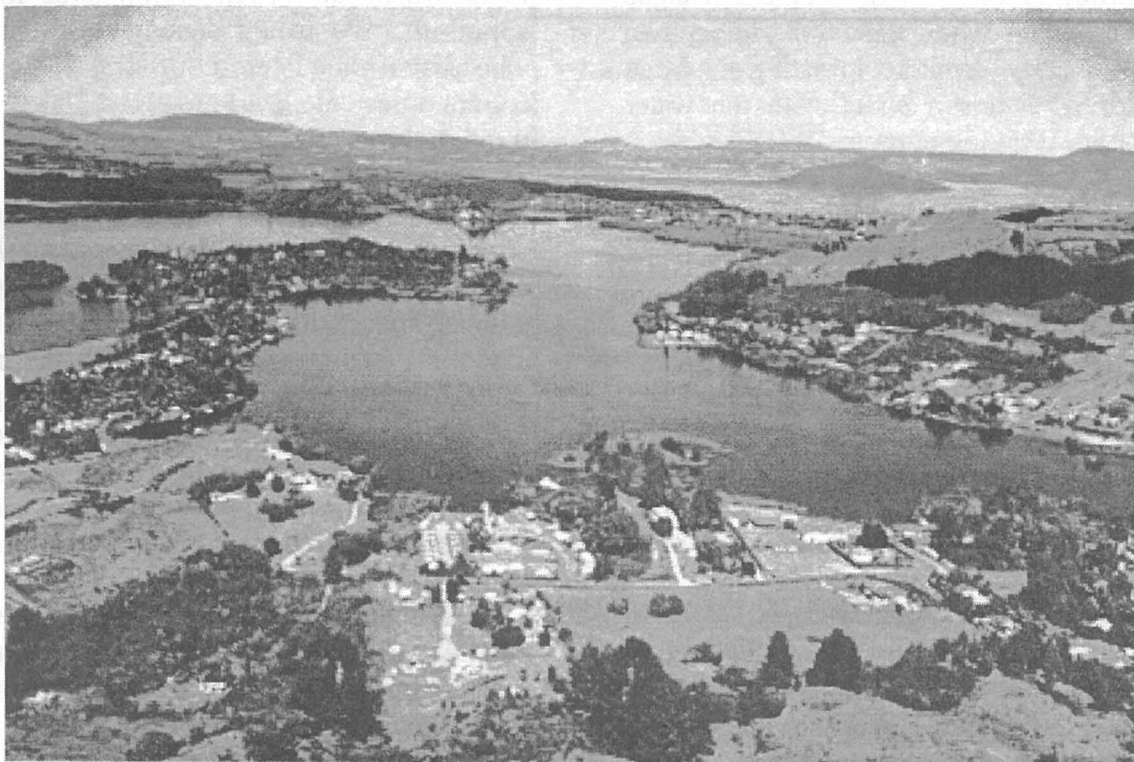




## *Lake Rotoiti Ratepayers & Residents Association*



West Rotoiti looking towards Rotorua *Courtesy of Betty Shepherd (see advert)*

### **Kia Ora Greetings from the Lake**

Few of us will be unaware of the disaster that beset Lake Rotoiti over the past summer. For the first time in history, the whole of the lake was subjected to public health warnings against coming into contact with the water or using it for drinking purposes due to the toxicity levels of the cyanobacterial blue-green algae which blanketed its entirety. Although the lake was virtually 'out of bounds' for the best part of the holiday season, some obviously ignored the warnings, apparently without consequence. Nevertheless, there were indeed reports of people contracting skin rashes and respiratory problems, attesting to the potential seriousness of the situation. Whilst the lake has since cleared considerably, Okawa Bay has remained outside the safe limit, and a recent tour shows that many areas have only semi-recovered.

Inevitably, attention focused on why measures had not been taken much earlier to try and prevent such an event at one of the foremost recreational lakes in the country. Our two local bodies, Rotorua District Council and Environment Bay of Plenty, who share responsibilities for catchment control and water quality, bore the brunt of the criticism. Others such as the local farming community also came under fire, particularly where stock continued to be allowed access to lake waters, and for their general contribution to nutrient input to the lakes.

One thing for sure is that few can now deny the absolute necessity of taking immediate steps to halt the decline and reverse the eutrophic trends of both Lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti for the longer term economic and environmental benefit and survival of the District. Whilst the causes of this catastrophe are many and varied, and have occurred over a long period of time, there should be no doubt that all of us, including local and central government have a responsibility to assist in the rehabilitation process.

# FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The year to date has been dominated by the rapid deterioration of Rotoiti's lake water quality due to a proliferation of toxic blue-green algae which covered the whole lake for almost two months from early summer attracting a public health warning against contact with the water and using it for drinking purposes.

Not unexpectedly, the situation provoked a public outcry with the media dishing up its usual dose of emotive and speculative statements. More credible sources such as the Lakes Water Quality Society were able to provide some rational comment and inject some objectivity and reality into the reporting. More importantly, LWQS wasted no time in seeking meetings with both Rotorua District Council and Environment BOP to urge emergency action to save the lakes.

We are strongly supportive of the LWQS in pursuing the implementation of immediate action plans for Lakes Rotorua/Rotoiti as part of the proposed Regional Water & Land Plan which has reached the formal Hearing stage. As an interim measure, we also support the contentious Rule 11 of the above Plan which proposes to restrict further nutrient input to the lakes from existing and future activities. The Rule has undergone some significant changes following two pre - Hearing meetings attended by representatives of leading submitters. However, we are aware that there remain objections amongst farming and other large landholding interests over the likely impact on business viability and economic opportunity.

In recognising the greater urgency required in combating Rotorua's lake problems, EBOP have budgeted almost \$1 million in the coming year to address lake issues. In addition, RDC has proposed to spend a total of \$3.3 million on the Mourea sewerage scheme to commence this financial term. Whilst applauding these substantial commitments made by both Councils, we will be seeking to ensure that there is overall funding sufficiency to support the programmes which are seen as necessary to begin the remediation process.

These along with other submissions will be made to both EBOP and RDC Draft Annual Plans which have been promulgated for public appraisal. We would encourage all ratepayers who have the interest of the lake and its communities at heart to lend their support through the submission process.

Since the onset of toxic algal blooms and health warnings over the past few years, the lake has unfortunately received adverse publicity at both a local and national level. This has deterred potential visitors and investors to the area and caused a downward trend in some property values with recent research by Environment BOP suggesting that deteriorating lake water quality could be influencing prices by as much as 14 percent in worst affected locations.

Whilst this is not good news, it is pleasing and encouraging that many residents have indicated greater importance in campaigning for more urgent action by the authorities to reverse these rapidly worsening trends in our lakes, particularly Rotoiti. It is imperative that we continue to gain momentum in this race against time. Our future heritage and lifestyle may well depend upon it.

Whilst most of our energies during the year have been directed at seeking urgent attention to remedy the plight of Lake Rotoiti, we remain focused on other important issues which are either pending or on the table. These matters will be pursued to the best of our ability in attempting to gain favourable outcomes.

Our thanks go to all those people who have assisted us and continue to assist us in our endeavours, particularly our subscribers and advertisers, without whom we would be unable to operate successfully. Especial thanks to Ivan Thomson of Te Akau Road who has given his time over the past two years to auditing our accounts for presentation at our Annual General Meetings. And to the committee, particularly Richard Wilson, who have provided the impetus for our continuing role in Rotoiti affairs.

# Refuse Update

As earlier agreed, a further meeting was held at the Okere Transfer Station between residents and RDC to discuss several matters brought up at the December meeting and at our AGM in January. The following summarises the issues discussed:

- a) It was advised that the cost of installing a coin/card operated kleensak chute would be prohibitive at around \$100,000 and was also likely to be abused.
- b) RDC had taken advice from other Councils on the question of providing 24 hour / 7 day recycling facilities. The advice was that it would be misused and untenable.
- c) The Station had only been used to 50-75% capacity through the summer period and did not justify the cost of increased opening hours at this stage according to RDC. However, a small compromise was reached which would provide for the Sunday hours to be amended to 10.00am – 4.00pm.
- d) RDC would decide on the information to be sent out in the form of a magnetic tablet with rates notices following the Annual Plan process.
- e) A request from residents for a periodical 'open day' to collect car bodies, whiteware etc would need to be the subject of an Annual Plan submission.

RDC has effectively abandoned the proposed Transfer Station at Waitangi Springs and are presently looking to secure an alternative site for the East Rotoiti / Rotoma communities.

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# LAKE WATER QUALITY

Throughout this year, the serious decline in Rotoiti's lake water quality has been the foremost issue in the minds of most. Whilst we have witnessed regular outbreaks of toxic algal bloom over the past few years in confined areas like Okawa Bay and to a lesser extent other parts of the western arm, it came as a complete shock to find the whole of the lake blanketed and put off limits with public health warnings for the best part of this summer season.

Initially, everyone hoped that it would be a very temporary aberration which would essentially disappear as quickly as it came. However, it soon became apparent that this was a much more severe outbreak than anything we had encountered previously and that it was not about to go away in a hurry. Worse still, we came to learn that the lake had become almost completely de-oxygenated. Along with the warm, calm and dry weather being experienced, this was providing the optimum conditions for algal bloom to thrive. Indeed, it was later revealed that the particular breed of algae present was now able to fix its own nitrogen from the air, allowing it to survive without the help of outside sources of nutrient.

The normal growth of macrophyte weed in the lake was being retarded through lack of light from the decreasing depth of the clear water column, a direct consequence of the rapidly declining water quality exacerbated by the algal bloom presence. The water had taken on a pea-green colour rather akin to a sewerage pond. Trout stock were also suffering, apparently confined to a restricted area between the uninhabitable (de-oxygenated) bottom waters and the extended column of warm upper water. In essence, the lake had suffered an almost mortal blow from which recovery, according to some experts, could be touch and go!

The situation provided a stark reminder of the fragile state of our lakes eco-systems and the threat to our lifestyles and economy.

Many lake residents vented anger towards our local bodies, mainly through the media, accusing them of having abrogated their responsibilities by ignoring the need for much earlier prevention measures.

Given the known trends from scientific research carried out on and off over many years, we might well have expected more expedient responses to the growing problems.

However, it should be acknowledged that there have been a number of significant initiatives put into place over the past 20 years or so. Major Farm Plan works were carried out principally during the 1980's as part of the Kaituna Catchment Control Scheme which involved the majority of perennial streams feeding Lake Rotorua being fenced and retired from grazing. Minor sections of water-course and some smaller wetlands around Awahou remain unprotected. Also some 500 metres of edge fencing is proposed to exclude stock from the Ohau Channel.

Around Rotoiti over the past 10 years, EBOP has worked on five large scale projects with private landowners in the north-east area of the lake. This work has focussed on excluding livestock from streams, wetlands and the lake edge, and has involved more than 16km of protection fencing being constructed. Plans exist for a further 4.5km of fencing in this location. EBOP have been negotiating for some years with landowners in the central north of the lake (Otaramarae to Honeymoon Bay) to fence around 900 metres of lake edge most vulnerable to livestock access. More recent awareness of the implications may help agreements being reached.

Whilst environmental programmes designed to tackle erosion, control runoff, provide riparian protection, and buffer streams and water bodies from near source pastoral nutrient input have been ongoing for many years, they remain voluntary with costs shared between EBOP (50%), the landowner and RDC (who may contribute towards some costs). Key components of these programmes are the provision of alternative water supplies and the economic effect on the property.

Also, in 1989, RDC took the major initiative of removing urban sewage effluent from direct input to the lake and built the present wastewater treatment plant incorporating modern techniques in land based nutrient uptake through the spray irrigation programme in Whakarewarewa forest.



## *Lake Water Quality --- cont*

It is an unfortunate fact that bureaucracy tends to build its own barriers which invariably create a legislative process not designed for speed of deliverance. This has no doubt been exacerbated by public demand for consultation and input into the decision-making process. The matter of our lakes management has been further complicated over the years by having the various responsibilities spread amongst a multitude of organisations, each with their own specific agendas, who have not always interacted to provide desired solutions or the best way forward. Over the past 10 years, the question of historical rights has also slowed decision making in regard to the lakes and lake catchments.

In 1996, we along with many others enthusiastically supported a Proposed Lakes Management Strategy which aimed to co-ordinate the wide ranging issues and manage them within a single structure under the joint directorship of the three major stakeholders, Te Arawa Māori Trust Board, Environment BOP and Rotorua District Council. Following initial consultation with statutory and special interest groups, a Draft document was produced in April 1998 and promulgated for public submission.

Our comprehensive submission was reproduced in the September 1998 Newsletter. Amongst other things, we noted the numerous reports regarding the contribution of excessive nutrient loading to declining lake water quality, and that reported improvements to Lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti attributable to the removal of treated sewage had become tempered by outbreaks of blue-green and foam bearing algae over the previous two years. We also supported the principle of lake margin retirement to reduce the direct input of (especially livestock) effluent and nutrients to the lake waters, and reiterated the necessity to address the problem of septic tanks in (specifically) low lying settlements. Since that time, we have seen little further progress in terms of community input.

An updated Draft was produced in early 2001 which outlined 18 tasks to be addressed through the establishment of several small working groups. We accepted the invitation to participate in areas of direct interest and requested updates on

other parts of the project as they came to hand. To date, we have heard nothing further apart from periodical RDC Committee Reports that the tasks are progressing. We have expressed our disappointment and frustration over the protracted nature of this 'progress' through Annual Plan submissions to both RDC and EBOP but to little avail. We do acknowledge that significant delays have occurred due to unresolved political issues. However, we believe that more effort could and should have been made much earlier to expedite what has now become an extremely urgent matter.

The latest RDC Council Reports outline a new approach which is in direct response to more recent events concerning lake water quality. It is now proposed to establish a 'Rotorua Lakes Strategy Joint Committee', with RDC and EBOP membership as provided for under the Local Government Act, and with Te Arawa invited to become a co-opted member. The committee would comprise two members from each of the three groups. The indications are that RDC wish to give effect to the vision of the LMS, and this would provide the opportunity to do so without some of the present impediments. Whatever vehicle is used to address the current issues, it would be our hope that all parties have come to realise that rhetoric alone will not help remedy the ills that beset our lakes. An all-embracing Action Plan is now required without further delay.

Lake Rotoiti's demise this year has been highlighted in the media across the whole of the country and even overseas. More importantly, it has been aired at a number of meetings convened by the authorities, particularly Environment Bay of Plenty (who are chiefly responsible for lake water quality) and Rotorua District Council (responsible for storm water, sewerage and District Planning). These meetings have been attended by Government agencies such as DOC and the Ministry of the Environment, other Local Government bodies, farming interest groups, business managers, iwi organisations and community focus groups such as the Lakes Water Quality Society and ourselves. Clearly the main thrust of the forums from our point of view has been to highlight the gravity of the situation and urge the decision-makers to now take emergency action to reverse the trends.

## *Lake Water Quality --- cont*

Environment BOP have responded favourably, firstly by proposing Action Plans for each of the most at risk lakes (Rotorua/Rotoiti in 2004), and secondly through Rule 11 of its Proposed Regional Water and Land Plan which intends to halt the increase of nutrient input to the lakes from all land based activities, at least until the Action Plans are implemented. This latter proposal has proved a contentious issue due primarily to the likely economic impact on further development within the catchments. For this reason, it has been opposed by the Rotorua District Council along with farming, business and iwi development groups, although a significant number of amendments have been made to address many of the concerns expressed at the discussion forums.

The Lakes Water Quality Society has led the way in promoting the adoption of the revised Rule 11 which we also strongly support as a necessary interim measure. However, the difficulty in reaching consensus clearly obviates the necessity to immediately commence the Action Plan for Lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti, which is seen as the best option for co-operative progress.

A number of mitigation measures are already planned and budgeted for by our local Councils such as ongoing lake and stream margin retirement in conjunction with landowners (especially to keep livestock out of lakes), the Mourea sewerage scheme which is currently delayed over negotiations with the landowners of the proposed treatment site (it is in everyone's interest that this be resolved speedily to enable the resource consent applications to proceed), the Rotorua sewerage plant upgrade designed to drastically reduce nitrogen leaching (it is now estimated that trees within the Whakarewarewa spray irrigation areas are taking up only a relatively small percentage of nitrogen from the effluent spray), and ongoing research into the source of nutrients for Lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti.

The Action Plan is intended to provide the platform for all affected parties to jointly agree on practical and equitable methods of further reducing nutrient input to these lakes based on the

source of nutrient studies both completed and awaiting completion. Most of this planned research is being carried out by NIWA on behalf of EBOP and RDC. However, the projected timeframes mean that completion is some way off. LWQS consider that the most important requirement is an updated assessment of nutrient inflow sources which were last reported on more than a decade ago. It is understood that EBOP are only seeking a desktop update on this.

In an effort to expedite implementation of the Action Plan, LWQS has resolved to provide funding from its own resources to support the employment of an additional graduate student by Professor David Hamilton at Waikato University to carry out this work, and so enable the information to become available much sooner. Your Association has decided to assist LWQS in this quest through a grant of \$2,000. We are sure that members would be right behind this action, given the extreme gravity of the lake's health.

Further to this, we have made submissions to the Proposed Regional Water and Land Plan and EBOP's Draft Annual Plan supporting the implementation of Rule 11 in its revised form, and reiterating the concerns of all members and residents over recent occurrences. We have urged them to bring forward the implementation of the Action Plan for Lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti whilst acknowledging their programmes to date.

No one should expect easy or quick solutions. There are many factors to be considered in determining how restoration of the lake can best be achieved for the benefit of our own and future generations. One thing is certain – all lakes eventually die from natural causes, usually over long periods of time. Our lakes, like many others, are dying much more quickly due to human influences, especially during the past 100 years. The state of Lake Rotoiti this past summer shows just how fragile the process can be. It would therefore seem imperative that every one of us now takes on the responsibility and commitment to help in addressing the problem while the chance remains to do so!

# NEWS & VIEWS

**New Local Government Act 2002.** The revised Act has now become law and our local Territorial Authorities are grappling with the implications and how it will affect current policy and regulatory process. Amongst other things, the new Act promotes 'a degree of self-determination for Councils and the community through public consultation'. Both RDC and EBOP are confident that they already practice many of the legislative requirements defined in the Act and that, rather than looking at a total revamp, they should build upon the existing foundation of accepted public policies and practices already in place.

Disappointingly, but perhaps not unexpectedly, our submission rejecting the proposal to revert to allowing property owners only one vote in local body elections in the District in which they are on the electoral roll, was not sustained. This means that our significant absentee owner population has again been disenfranchised. It appears unlikely that this can be reversed in the short term.

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**Community Projects.** At our last Annual General Meeting, a motion was passed approving committee expenditure of up to \$6,000 from accumulated reserves on projects considered to be of benefit to the wider Rotoiti community. At its last meeting, the committee decided to activate this mandate by approving grants to what it considered to be two worthy causes.

Firstly, we received notification that the Lakes Water Quality Society had resolved to raise funding for extra scientific work involving the measurement of nutrient flows from streams flowing into Lakes Rotorua and Rotoiti intended to provide significant new data ahead of the NIWA report on which the Action Plan could be based. In our belief that such a project would receive widespread support from our members, it was resolved to provide a grant of \$2,000 to assist this cause.

Secondly, it came to our attention that the West Rotoiti Fire Unit, which allows the use of its committee room to local community groups for a small hireage fee was in need of funding assistance to modify their burglar alarm system so that the committee room could be isolated from the main system, thereby precluding the necessity for a fire party member to be available to turn the alarm on and off when the room was in use by an outside party.

This facility is used by the Association and a number of other groups for meetings and other gatherings. In the light of this, the committee was of the unanimous opinion that we should provide funding for this modification. Accordingly, a grant of \$580 was made available to facilitate the installation.

In addition, the sum of \$2,000 was approved for the purchase of an appropriate computer system and printer for use by the LRRRA secretary in recognition of present day requirements.



**Gisborne Point** *Courtesy of Betty Shepherd (see advert)*



# Report of the Harbour Master

With Easter and Anzac weekends past we will see a sharp decline in holidaymakers and weekenders boating on Lake Rotoiti.

With the fishing improving relative to Lake Water temperature dropping, we are seeing an increase in those fishing our waters, many of which are out after dark. An ideal time to reiterate the need for all boaties plying in hours of darkness or limited visibility to display correct navigation lights. I continue to be amazed at the numbers in breach of this major requirement.

I reflect on my youth and how proud I used to feel out on Lake Rotoiti, sailing at night and displaying navigation lights. I fully accepted, even at a young age, that this was mandatory; and used to take care of my yacht lights as a matter of routine maintenance. So you can imagine my disbelief at folk who flout the law with absolute disregard for themselves, other boaties, and their obligations. Lights should be perceived as basic 'housekeeping'. Why is it that even on vessels fitted with working lights, many operators seem to choose not to flick the switch and display them?

To take this train of thought to another level, why is it that \$80,000 vessels can roll off the manufacturer's floor and not be fitted with navigation lights? I believe this situation requires redress through the Boating Industries Association. After all, just because someone is adamant that they are only going to drive a car during daylight hours, it doesn't change the fact that lights are always standard equipment. So, the message is *'use your lights or pay the price'*. \$200 is acceptable payment for your negligence; paying with your life, or that of someone else, is not!

We have completed our Data Capture project, pertaining to buoys, on Lake Rotoiti. Being able to apply this data onto Lake Maps projected with the WGS 84 datum that Global Positioning Systems recognise, enables us to place our buoys onto accurate geographical positions. From there

we can create Lake Guides, with the Rotoiti guide almost complete. The next stage is to begin capturing the structures and isolated danger beacons.

Many of you who use the Lake waters after dark will no doubt be pleased to hear that in the next six weeks we will be undertaking a project to reflectorize all of the buoyage throughout the Lake.

The major upset this past season has been the Lake Water Quality. This has lead to lower than normal numbers plying the lake, but that aside, the need to support and resource groups tackling the problems has never been greater. We all have a level of responsibility towards our environment and those lucky enough to live near or on the lakeshores must do their bit too. It's not someone else's problem, it's your problem and my problem, and when you consider it has taken 50 years to decline to this point; the time to act is now, for it may take as long to recover. ***Support the groups that are supporting your environment!***

Our Compliance runs this past season were boosted greatly by the implementation of two jet skis to support 'Ra' with patrol work. These enabled us to spread ourselves further over the 22,000 hectares of surface water we are charged with monitoring within the district. However, we are buoyed greatly by the allocation of \$101,000 for an additional patrol vessel and tow vehicle. With a huge geographical area that provides such challenge, the need for an additional vessel is obvious, and patrols and work in the field will be greatly enhanced by her commissioning.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have wholeheartedly supported us over the past summer. We look forward to this continued support and also meeting more of you as time goes on. As per usual, your eyes and ears prove their worth; please feel free to contact us on Ph 348 4199.

Sincerely

**Andrew Lang**  
**RDC Harbourmaster**

## KAITUNA CATCHMENT CONTROL SCHEME

It will be recalled that last year, Environment BOP decided to change the method of rating for the Kaituna Catchment Control Scheme so that both Upper and Lower scheme ratepayers would contribute to the one fund rather than two separate funds as had been the case. They engaged a consultant, Mr Ross Campbell, to provide a detailed analysis report of the costs and benefits to each area and recommend a rating regime accordingly.

We, along with several other submitters, objected to the proposed new rating system due to what we believed to be several unsubstantiated assessments in the Analysis Report along with a complicated and seemingly unfair classification system. In our view, this resulted in Rotorua ratepayers being disproportionately rated, particularly lakeside residents.

The changes were adopted by the narrowest of votes within Council, but we were given some assurance that the changes would be reviewed during the next term.

We attended a scheme meeting in early April held at Te Puke and attended by representatives of several farming groups and others at which the proposed works and budgets for the coming year were presented. It was apparent that the majority of maintenance and enhancement measures to be undertaken were in the lower catchment. However, the increase in rates required for the year was 6 percent across the board. We noted that this inequity would undoubtedly be repeated each year under the present rating system and justified our calls for a review. We will be seeking to ensure this happens over the coming term.



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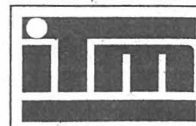
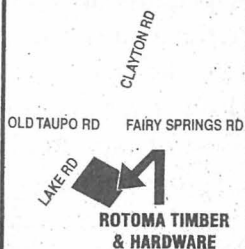
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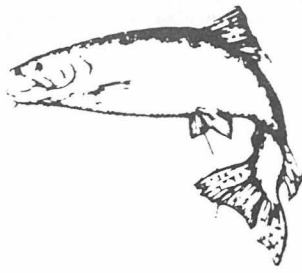
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## ANGLERS' CORNER



The fishing for 2003 definitely started slowly for Lake Rotoiti. The hot dry weather and the algae bloom have been to blame, with all but the most ardent Rotoiti anglers wetting a line during January and February. Traditionally I find the lake starting to produce numbers of well-conditioned fish in late February but for me it did not start to happen until mid-March. Overall I believe the season has been three weeks behind.

The fishing on the lake since mid-March has improved every week with good numbers of 2 – 3 kilo fish being landed by all methods. This may be a direct result of the lack of pressure the lake received early in the year. April has been the best month so far with both jigging and trolling producing results. Good catches of quality fish have been reported, although the average size has been down a little on previous years. The next 2 months should boom for the boat and shoreline fly fisherman alike and I wouldn't be surprised if we experienced some late runs of fish during July and August for the shoreline angler. These are the months the fish are congregating for spawning and it is the best time to target good numbers in concentrated areas as the fish feed ferociously before venturing into their favourite stream or spawning area.

Remember the lake is closed to boat fisherman from the 30<sup>th</sup> June until the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, and shoreline angling is only permitted during this period between the designated winter shoreline fishing landmarks situated at Ruato & Hinehopu extending 200 metres off shore ( if you are tall enough to wade this far out ).

During May and June the harling in shallow water (5 - 30 feet) can be excellent - being on the water for sunrise or sunset is the best time. I'll be trying the old favourite flies like the Parsons Glory, Green Orbit and Jack Spratt in the bigger sizes as the smelt I have seen in dressed fish the last few weeks have been big. When deep trolling after the sun is up I'll be running the lines

between 40 and 60 feet deep and looking for concentrations of fish - they could be in 100 feet of water but sitting mid-level, so if you are finding it a little slow contouring, move out from the drop-offs a little. Goldies, Black and White or Red and Black are usually good colours to start with.

The jigging May and June can be either feast or famine, but also the best time to target a trophy fish. I've found drifting right into the shallows can produce the big ones (as shallow as 30 feet) at this time of year. Because the trout can be very aggressive at this time I try all sorts of jigs and flies from smelt, bully and Koura patterns to out and out attractor patterns. For the shoreline angler, the fly fishing has started a little slow with the runs of spawning fish being patchy although most anglers are securing fish for the smoker. This is to be expected. As stated before, the season appears to be three weeks behind. Some rain and /or bad weather should shift things into top gear.

The eastern end of the lake is the best area to wet a fly this time of the year because the main release points of hatchery fish are located here. In saying this, until the end of June the Delta where the Ohau Channel enters Rotoiti (remember we are now allowed to anchor a boat to fly fish from here), and some of the drop-offs on the northern side of the lake which can be accessed by boat produce some outstanding fish (both wild and hatchery released). A number of methods work during this period from glo bugging with fast sinking lines to retrieving a fly on a slow sinking line, but by far the most popular method during this period is to use a floating line very early morning (5 – 7.00am) or late afternoon through to mid-night.

Every angler has his or her favourite flies but a good start to those new to the area is to use a lumo doll fly then change to the more traditional patterns such as a Scotch Poacher or Marabou as the season progresses. Best of luck to all for the rest of the season and be sure to make the most of our fishery, after all its one of the reasons some of us live here. No matter if you are chasing a trophy fish or just looking for a plump fish for the smoker, now is a good time to be out and about.

**Tightlines - GREG TUUTA**



# LAKE ROUNDABOUT

**Gisborne Point Walkway.** This long promoted project finally received funding approval from RDC following last year's Annual Plan submissions. It was confirmed later in the year that work would be completed around Easter 2003. Unforeseen land issues caused some delay but it is understood that these have been resolved and that construction will be completed by the end of May. Part of the walkway will now be concreted with kerb and channel with the remainder unsealed as previously planned.

**Maritime Safety Act.** Earlier this year, new rules requiring all regulatory and commercial vessels to carry survey certification and be controlled only by skippers with appropriate qualifications came into force. This became necessary, we are told, because of a need to weed out increasing numbers of unscrupulous operators whose equipment and expertise were not up to standard.

Whilst supporting the safety principles, we were dismayed that our additional lake inspector resources, gained after years of lobbying, would be compromised since they would not comply with these new regulations. Having expressed concerns to our MP Steve Chadwick, Government personnel met with RDC and other interested parties in Rotorua. However, no concessions for volunteer lakes inspectors have been allowed.

One matter which has been clarified followed a perception that mariners may no longer intervene in boating safety incidents unless they have first phoned the police to seek consent. Apparently some voluntary Coastguard organisations were reluctant to commit their limited resources unless they had been activated by the police who provide reimbursement for rescue operations.

In fact, Section 32 of the Maritime Transport Act remains specific about the duty to assist persons in danger and to respond to distress calls. In essence, the Master of any vessel is obliged by law to render all assistance possible to any person found at sea (any waters) in danger of being lost; or after a collision; or on receiving a signal that a ship, aircraft, or survival craft is in distress, to proceed with all speed to assist.

**Manupirua Springs Extensions.** The lessees of the Springs complex, Lake Rotoiti Hot Pools Ltd, in conjunction with the owners, have applied to RDC for resource consent to extend the jetty facilities. The proposal is to construct two additional jetties of similar length to, and adjoining the three already in existence. The jetties are for public use and patrons of the Springs and are believed necessary to relieve congestion at peak times so that visitors and users of the Pools can be accommodated more safely and comfortably.

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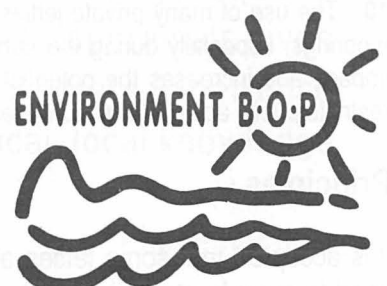
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# Criteria For Assessment Of Jetty Applications On Lakes

By Alison Ellery, RDC Parks & Recreation Planner

Last year, the Community, Parks and Recreation Committee resolved *'that Council staff develop assessment criteria for future jetty applications on Council reserves in consultation with Lakes Ratepayer Associations, and bring back to this Committee for approval'*. At present, there are no guidelines for how these applications are to be treated. The main problem faced by Council staff is that they are being asked to sanction an increasing number of jetties, many of which are on Council reserve land.

## **Issues**

There are several issues associated with private jetties on public reserve land that need to be taken into account.

1. Private jetties are an alienation of public space for the benefit of a select few. In a few cases they also have a commercial use and the owner derives a financial benefit.
2. Council has authority under the Reserves Act to allow the construction of jetties by private owners, but only for public use and enjoyment, not for private use.
3. Jetties in some situations can enhance public access to the water for bathing, and access from the lake where there is no other access. This can enhance recreational use of the reserve and adjacent water.
4. Council has no robust policy as landowner on restricting the potential number of private jetties, with the result that they continue to proliferate.
5. Although the shared use of jetties between adjacent property owners is encouraged by Council, there is no method to ensure that it persists in the face of neighbours' disputes and property sales. The limited control on transfer means that one party can have their rights sold out from under them. The aggrieved party then has recourse to Council for a new jetty.
6. A proliferation of jetties can be unsightly, and restrict the availability and use of open water close to the shore. This can in turn restrict the use of the reserve.
7. There is an assumption by neighbouring property owners that they have an entitlement to a jetty in front of their property even if their property is separated from the water by public reserve. There is a related assumption that people who don't own property on the water have no entitlement.
8. Jetty ownership is traditionally linked to property ownership, and jetties are often sold along with houses even though they are on public land and do not comprise part of the property. In some cases they are retained or sold separately to different owners. However, the legal situation is somewhat different, with ownership of the structure attaching to the land it is on in the absence of legal authority in the form of a lease, licence or consent that specifies private ownership of the structure.
9. The shallow lake waters in some areas mean that jetties need to be well over the standard Council approved length of 12 metres. Many are 15 to 20 metres in length, with some longer again. This can have a significant visual effect, especially when boats are tied up at them for extended periods. This is also exacerbated by the addition of dog-legs and T-bars to the end.
10. The use of many private jetties is not consistent with the interpretation of a wharf or jetty. Many private jetties are used as moorings, especially during the summer months. This restricts the number of potential users of the jetty, increases the visual impact, and increases the potential for contamination of the water with fuel, oil and waste products from maintenance. It also restricts public access for security reasons.

## **Principles**

It is accepted that some jetties are necessary and even enhance the recreational use of reserves and lakes. When used to moor boats during peak season use, they also reduce boat traffic on roads, congestion at boat ramps, and the need for trailer parking on reserves. Jetties also reduce the amount of damage to the shoreline environment caused by pulling boats into shore. The jetty policy must therefore allow provision for an increased number of boats on the lakes without further proliferation of individual structures. The following principles for jetties on Council reserves are proposed as a way of achieving this:

- a) That the ongoing ownership and use of a jetty on public reserve land by private individuals is not a right but a privilege.
- b) That Council has a significant role in ownership and management of jetty structures on public reserve land.
- c) That jetties may be used to reduce congestion at boat ramps and on reserves, enhance public recreational use of the water and the reserve, and reduce damage to the shoreline environment.

- d) That the use of existing and new jetties must be maximised.
- e) That the impact of jetty structures on visual and recreational amenity must be minimised.
- f) That the total number and size of jetties must be appropriate for each lake, or part of a lake.

## Methods

There are a number of methods that could be employed to comply with the stated principles. Consultation is needed with each of the lakeside communities and other affected parties in order to determine what these methods should be, and ultimately what the criteria will be against which applications will be assessed. Council staff are starting with Lakes Tarawera and Rotoiti as a first priority as these two lakes have the highest pressure for new jetty structures involving Council reserve land.

## Community Consultation

To further the development of this policy, feedback is sought from the ratepayer associations. The sorts of things the community should consider and provide a response to include:

1. Which of the issues raised do residents and ratepayers feel are the most important in their area? Are there others?
2. Is there any major disagreement with the principles proposed?
3. Can the community suggest any ways of reducing the negative impacts of jetties on their lakes and reserves?
4. Is there a need to limit the numbers of jetties on the lake?
5. If there is, then how close are we getting to reaching that limit?
6. Are some areas more sensitive than others, i.e. should there be greater limitations on some areas than others?

Once responses are received on these matters, it is intended to develop criteria and performance standards against which applications for new jetties can be assessed. Methods will also be developed to reduce the impact of new and existing structures on the reserve and lake environment. We would appreciate any community input or comment on this subject.

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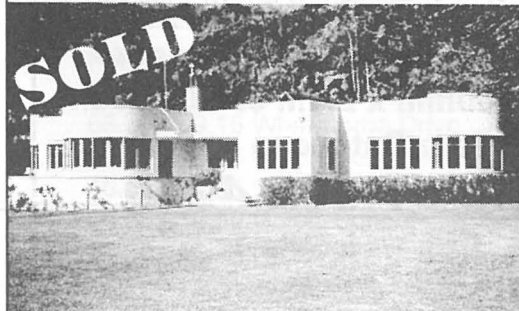
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# DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN SUBMISSIONS

## ROTORUA DISTRICT COUNCIL

Submissions to Rotorua District Council's Draft Annual Plan for this year close 23 May 2003. We have not yet finalised our submission but the following issues will be addressed.

***Rotorua Lakes Management.*** Request to be made for RDC to embrace the need for priority measures to address the state of Lake Rotoiti and endorse current proposals for reduction of nutrient inputs.

***Mourea Sewerage Scheme.*** The Resource Consent Application is six months behind schedule due to stalled land negotiations. We will be urging Council to expedite a resolution. Hamurana Road residents are seeking to be included in the scheme and we shall be supporting these requests. The Capital Funding Policy also remains on the table awaiting agreement with the community.

***Other Sewerage Schemes.*** The Hinehopu upgrade is scheduled for this term and requires confirmation. In addition, the Okere/Otaramarae communities have recently resolved to lobby Council to reticulate their area and are seeking our support.

***Okere Refuse Transfer Station.*** Current community needs are for periodical collections of non standard disposal items such as car bodies, whiteware, etc. A funding allocation will be sought for this purpose.

***Ruato Bay Layby.*** A request for some tree planting will be made to provide shade for this area.

***Te Ngae Junction.*** We support concerns surrounding this road junction despite recent improvements. A roundabout is considered to be the best method of addressing the hazards associated with negotiating this piece of highway.

***Lakes Inspectorate.*** Recent changes to the Maritime Safety Act have meant that most of our part-time and Honorary Lakes Inspectors can no longer be employed in these roles. We will be seeking to ensure that RDC continue to provide sufficient resources to provide the necessary levels of control and maintenance, particularly over the busy summer period. This includes the purchase of an additional vessel(s) for this purpose.

## ENVIRONMENT BAY OF PLENTY

The following matters have been addressed to Environment BOP's Draft Annual Plan for which submissions closed 7 May 2003.

***Rotorua Lakes Management.*** We have taken further opportunity to express grave concerns for the future health of Lake Rotoiti. EBOP's initiatives to combat the problems to date have been acknowledged (these have been identified in the article on Lake Water Quality). The reference to budgeted expenditure of \$900,000 for Rotorua Lakes Management in this year's estimates has been noted. A clear indication of where this money is to be expended has been requested. We have also urged Council to bring forward the programmed Action Plan for Lakes Rotorua/Rotoiti to commence immediately given the critical state of these lakes revealed in recent scientific evidence. Sufficient funding to facilitate this is also required.

***On-Site Effluent Treatment Regional Plan.*** We support the full review of this Plan targeted for this financial year. Our previous concerns remain and it also needs to be reconciled with the Regional Water and Land Plan.

***Kaituna Catchment Control Scheme.*** We have requested that this scheme be reviewed as part of this DAP, given the widespread dissatisfaction within the community over last year's rating changes.

***Environment Enhancement Fund (EEF).*** We have continued to endorse this initiative which has positive spin-offs for the community. However, the level of funding to be made available has been decreased and we have asked for this to be re-considered.

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# West Rotoiti Volunteer Fire Force

The first three months of 2003 were busy ones for the unit. We responded to 12 scrub fires, 1 burning vehicle, 1 TV fire, 1 personal injury and a tree across SH33.

Our five new recruits have all passed their basic training and are keen to get into action. A BBQ with invited guests and members on the day of their inauguration was a great success. All fire fighters have now been trained to the new NZQA standards required by their in the Fire Unit.

The Annual Fishing Competition is set down for June 15. There are trophies for a number of categories and as is usual a sausage sizzle and liquid refreshments is available after weigh in and presentation of trophies. We look forward to seeing a few new faces at the weigh in.

Remember that fire permits are still required and are available from Rotorua District Council Engineers, Department of Conservation if within 1 km of a reserve, or Fletcher Challenge at Waiotapu. Now that winter is approaching it is a good idea to have electric blankets and gas heaters checked and test smoke alarms.

## CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS:

John James [Chairman] - 3624124

Dan Arrowsmith [Training] - 3624477

Keith Smith [Secretary] - 3624178

Carol Goodman [Treasurer] - 3624517

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## WEST ROTOITI ACTION GROUP

A group of residents from the Okere / Otaramarae area concerned over the disastrous state of Lake Rotoiti, called a public meeting recently to discuss the matter. The meeting held 19 April at the West Rotoiti Fire Station and attended by 91 people resolved to formally constitute the West Rotoiti Action Group (WRAG) as an 'autonomous' sub-committee of the Lake Rotoiti Ratepayers and Residents Association.

The stated aim of the committee is to lobby Rotorua District Council for an Okere Falls / Otaramarae reticulated sewerage scheme and a safe water supply for West Rotoiti. Their initial action has been to send mail-outs to all residents

around the lake outlining their concerns and aims and urging residents in other parts of the lake to set up similar action groups to deal with the water quality problems being experienced.

The Association will obviously support any representative groups in seeking improvements to our environment and facilities. We would simply remind everyone that, in pursuing similar objectives on behalf of all lake residents and ratepayers, it is clearly important that we maintain a unified approach to various issues so that our efforts are not unduly compromised. We should all ensure that priorities are set and agreed upon for the overall benefit of our local communities.

## Mobile Library Calendar

**Tuesday Route 2003/2004**

**Fortnightly from 13 May 2003**

08.50 - 09.15 Wharetoroa Drive  
09.30 - 10.00 Rotoma School  
10.05 - 10.25 Rotoma Store  
10.30 - 10.50 Rotoiti School  
11.20 - 11.45 Happy Angler Store

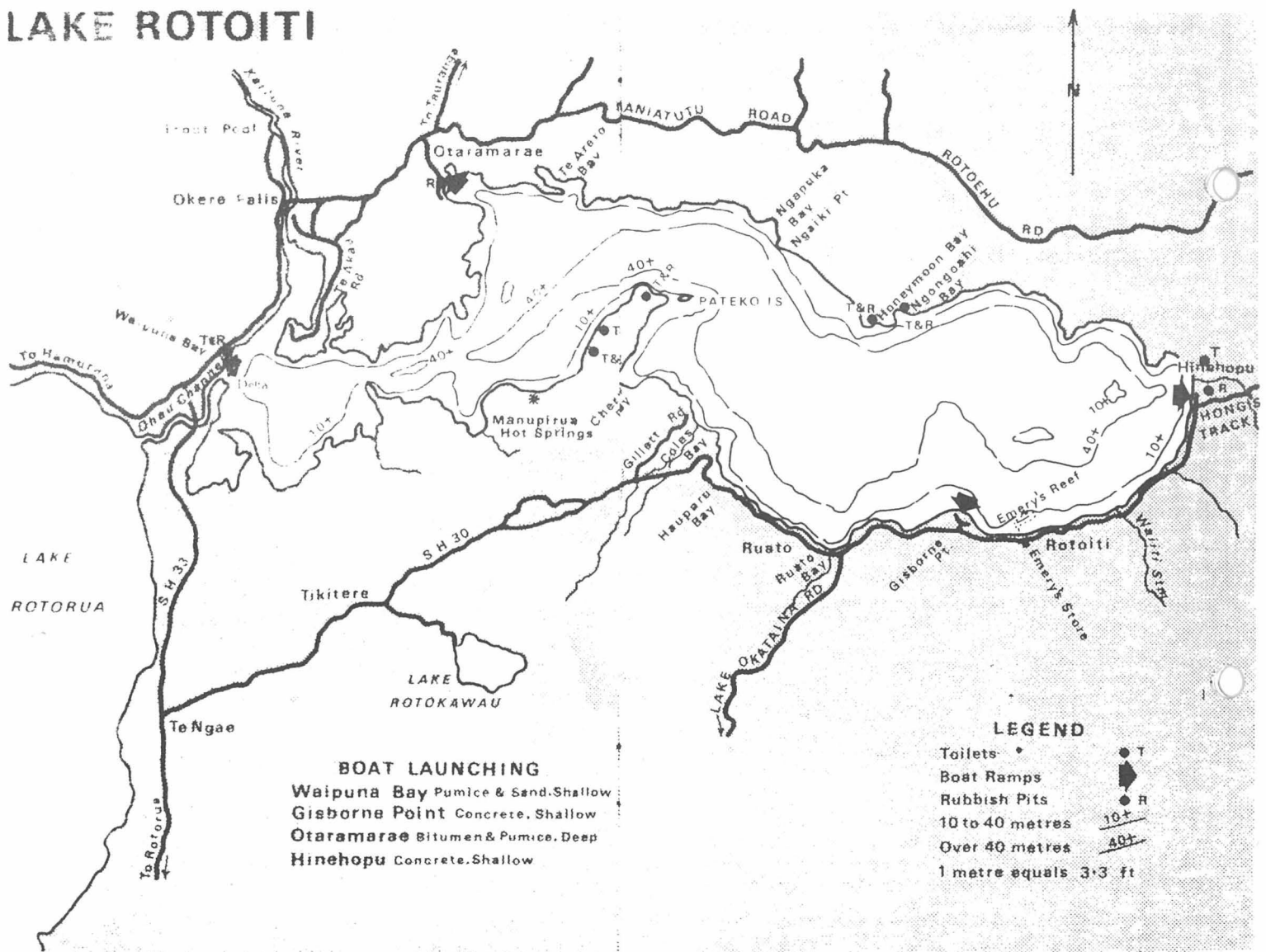
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  - \* Talking books
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## 2003 COMMITTEE

<b>CHAIRMAN/TREASURER</b>	Jim Stanton	Okawa Bay, Mourea	Ph (07) 362 4690
<b>DEPUTY CHAIRMAN</b>	Fred Whata	Okere Falls	Ph (07) 362 4842
<b>SECRETARY</b>	Richard Wilson	Otaramarae	Ph (07) 362 4308
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Donald Calder	Mourea	Ph (07) 362 4222
	Peter Carr-Smith	Gisborne Point	Ph (07) 362 7764
	Tai Eru-Morehu	Maniatutu Road	Ph (07) 362 4392
	Bill Kingi	Parcliffe	Ph (07) 345 7186
	Nick Miller	Te Akau Road	Ph (07) 362 4747
	Laurence Tamati	Mourea	Ph (07) 345 6735

## LAKE ROTOITI



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Search and Rescue **111**  
Accident and Emergency  
medical care centre **348 1000**  
Urgent Pharmacy **348 4385**  
ROTORUA HOSPITAL **348 1199**  
Poison Information (03) **474 7000**

### USEFUL INFORMATION

Dog control - Rotorua  
District Council **348 4199**  
Environmental pollution  
hotline **0800 738 393**  
Lakes Inspector  
Andrew Lang **348 4199**  
SPCA **349 2955**

Police Station Rotorua **348 0099**

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