

Okawa Bay Removal of Weed Wash Up

See Emails on the subject from BoPRC and Okawa Bay representative Richard Amery below:

From: Helen Creagh <Helen.Creagh@boprc.govt.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 30 March 2022 3:04 pm

To: Richard Amery <okawabayneighbours@outlook.com>; Richard Amery <richard@amery.net>

Subject: RE: weed problems once again

Tēnā koe Richard,

Thank you for your emails below.

One of my team visited Okawa Bay before the bad weather last week and took some photos (I have attached a couple to this email and will send through a couple more separately as they are quite big) of the weed wash up, and made an assessment of whether there was a role for the Toi Moana in taking action on a public amenity basis to clear the weed. Our assessment was that wasn't the case, as the issue was really a private amenity one, the public access shorelines, jetty etc were accessible.

While I agree with you that rotting weed isn't pleasant, I don't consider it to be toxic. Although it certainly creates an unpleasant amenity effect for those private dwellings. Our scientist confirmed with me that it's unlikely to be a driver of the algae blooms that have been present. However, once any weed dies and breaks down to the bed of the lake it does become available as nutrient, which is a driver in algae blooms. The presence of lake weed may actually be an indicator of good water quality (clarity), i.e. if there was an algae bloom there wouldn't be sufficient light for the weed to grow, we have had that on Rotoehu over a number of years recently.

Before I got back to you I just wanted to clarify responsibilities around weed on the Te Arawa Lakes. My team operate the weed harvester and have a small budget for using that where there is a public amenity issue. The extensive weed wash up recently at the Rotorua lakefront certainly had significant impact on amenity. We haven't seen anything to that extent in my time. We also use the harvester on Rotoehu annually (when weed growth is available) to harvest weed for nutrient reduction purposes on that lake – i.e. we are trying to reduce the internal load of nutrient in the sediments of the lake available for algae growth.

Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) fund weed spraying of established weed beds on the Te Arawa Lakes, including Rotoiti. That responsibility is assigned to them under the Te Arawa Settlement Act, Toi Moana don't rate for or fund large scale spraying. Toi Moana's role in weed management is a biosecurity one under the Biosecurity Act and our Regional Pest Management Plan, i.e. managing new incursions of weed. The resource consent for spraying of weed across the Te Arawa lakes is actually held jointly between Land Information New Zealand and Toi Moana. Toi Moana use that consent to manage new weed incursions on lakes that don't already have invasive weeds present, LINZ use it for spraying beds where weeds are already established on lakes, e.g. Rotorua and Rotoiti.

I also note that the current resource consent for the spraying limits the area that can be sprayed in enclosed bays to 5% of the area (I see you refer to this below). I understand there is application being considered to change the conditions of that consent to enable 25% of the beds to be sprayed in these bays, view of the lakebed owners (Te Arawa Lakes Trust) will be key to consideration of this. If residents are keen to see more investment in spraying of established weed it may be worth contacting Land Information New Zealand to seek an increase in budget, Regional Council don't collect rates for this work.

If the landowners ever wanted to get together to have the weed removed from their properties I can highly recommend the Te Arawa Lakes Trust team that William Anaru runs at the Trust. They are hard-working, get things done and have very reasonable rates. They also whakapapa to Te Arawa and the lakes so it is nice to have that connection.

Thank you for your time. Kia pai to ra.

Ngā mihi

Helen

[Helen Creagh](#)

Rotorua Catchments Manager

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Thriving together – mō te taiao, mō ngā tāngata

From: Richard Amery <okawabayneighbours@outlook.com>

Sent: Sunday, 20 March 2022 3:53 pm

To: Helen Creagh <Helen.Creagh@boprc.govt.nz>

Cc: Fiona McTavish <Fiona.McTavish@boprc.govt.nz>; Greg Corbett
<Greg.Corbett@boprc.govt.nz>

Subject: weed problems once again

Dear Helen,

Although we have not met, I am the local Neighbourhood Support representative for Okawa Bay (and, by default) this end of Lake Rotoiti, and residents are complaining about rafts of weed preventing boating and swimming, and polluting the bay when it comes ashore.

Rotorua Lakes Council's newsletter talks about the big clean up of weed on the Rotorua lakefront in town, a joint effort between Te Arawa Lakes Trust, Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council and Rotorua Lakes Council. They have said that:

"A plan is now also underway for the two councils and Te Arawa Lakes Trust to work together to ensure a more streamlined clean-up for any future lake weed stranding. This includes obtaining consent to allow the weed harvester and an excavator to work together, especially in the shallow areas to enable a quick removal of weed"

We are obviously pleased that there will be a more streamlined clean up of lake weed in future, and I am sure we all understand that the Rotorua lakefront had to be a higher priority for an urgent clean up than Okawa Bay, but after so many weeks of rotting weed, we feel that now you have completed the lakefront clean up, we would like to now ask for some weed removal help in the bay, followed by similar action in other affected bays on Lake Rotoiti.

I was requested by local people to see if perhaps a combined approach from concerned residents via myself as Neighbourhood Support Representative might get more attention than those same people contacting BOPRC directly and individually, because they feel that when they do so their concerns are brushed aside.

Accordingly I asked local people if they would like to attach their names and contact details to this letter, and these are listed below.

I have been in touch with Lakes Water Quality Society who tell me that (incredibly to me) resource consent is only for weed spraying 5% of Okawa Bay, which as I am sure you know is a public amenity attracting the major concentration of visitor and local people's water activities in the lake. As the most sheltered designated water skiing area in the Rotorua lakes, it attracts tourist trailer boats from all over the North Island, and with two boat ramps, a hotel, Marae and timeshare units it is very much a tourist attraction and public amenity for Rotorua.

If not sprayed properly and/or harvested, after every major storm this weed floats in rafts making boating and swimming difficult, and inevitably ends up stranded in front of local properties, where it festers, causes algae blooms and becomes a serious health risk.

In the longer term, we are seeking your assurance that this 5% of area cap on weed spraying will be increased, and we would like to hear what your time frame is for doing this, and your plans and timetable for weed spraying and harvesting areas of Lake Rotoiti.

In the short term, right now a serious problem exists in the bay with weed packed tightly in front of some properties, and the people who own these houses, (some of whom are retired widows) don't have the resources to move the weed themselves.

Easter with it's heavy use of the bay is less than a month away, and we would like to ask for some very modest help to clean up beaches in the bay now?

We feel we need two or three hours with two men, a truck and a fork equipped tractor capable of working in a metre or so of water, and the current problem will be gone.

Helen, are you prepared to help us in this way?

Sincerely,
Richard Amery, on behalf of local ratepayers.