

# **Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations of New Zealand Inc**

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## **CORANZ 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Report: July 2008 – June 2009**

### **1 Introduction**

Greetings CORANZ member Bodies and Councillors. CORANZ has again achieved a creditable year due to the untiring efforts of a few individuals - totally voluntarily it should be noted. Our resources this year have concentrated on land acquisition for outdoor recreation eg St James, pastoral lease tenure review, wild and scenic rivers protection, and opposing repeal of the 2004 Foreshore and Seabed Act.

The Act made the foreshore and seabed a public common, with public access and use for all recreational interests. We have also liaised with the new Walking Access Commission, a Commission carefully selected to represent rural interests, and exclude representatives from the recreational interests CORANZ members have – fishers, hunters, FWD users, jet boaters.

The new National-ACT-Maori coalition government has shown little interest in the things it vaguely promised for outdoor recreation. It is proposing greatly reducing surrender of land to DOC from tenure review, and replacing surrender with covenants, which of course, do not allow public access or any public say in tracks and other facilities.

It is moving back to peppercorn rentals for multi-million dollar pastoral leases. It is also looking to encourage more mining on public recreation lands where it is currently forbidden. All rivers are likely to be available for damming and water abstraction, and the Government is looking increasingly at using public conservation land as a cheap solution to Maori Treaty Claims. Rarely has a government been so blatant in moving quickly to free up public resources for its local and transnational friends.

Where it has been helpful, is in agreeing to a statutory Big Game Hunting Council, being established through an establishment committee, it is United Future Peter Dunne's governance agreement, which has kept National on track. Hunting bodies must be alert that such a Council must not be a "toothless tiger" with members gagged, as was the NZ Recreational Hunting Council back in the 1980s.

The 2008 Outdoor Recreation Charter, prepared by CORANZ last year, still provides helpful guidance about what CORANZ members want from governments to enhance outdoor recreation.

### **2 Specific areas of CORANZ work and submissions**

CORANZ has been involved in the following major issues during the year.

#### **2.1 Public Foreshore and Seabed**

This issue has come up again because the Maori party, who campaigned on repealing the present 2004 Act, had this Review as one of their agreements with National. The present Act suits recreational users fine, as it makes the foreshore and seabed that is not in private ownership into a public common managed for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

CORANZ and Public Access New Zealand (PANZ) made submissions and presented to the Panel. But 85% of the six hundred submissions came from Maori present at hui with the Panel. The Ministerial panel was stacked in iwi favour with a membership of former Waitangi Tribunal judge Eddie Durie, Victoria University treaty lawyer Richard Boast and the daughter of Sir Tipene O'Regan.

The problem the Maori Party has with the 2004 Act is that it is too difficult for iwi or hapu to prove customary use. Voila! The Panel recommended clarifying the uncertainty by assuming customary rights existed, and giving them to the appropriate coastal iwi. The Crown would then negotiate a national or regional outcome with iwi and hapu from this position of weakness.

Hugh presented the recreational view on Radio NZ, saying outdoor recreation was always disadvantaged by private property rights, and commenting on the staked nature of the Panel, when the Report was released. He also appeared on Maori TV's Native Affairs in mid-July, as the only person on the 6-person panel supporting the present Act.

Hugh also had an opinion piece in the Herald on 31 July pointing out the folly of National going with the Ministerial Panel's recommendations, and proposing staying with the present Act. At time of writing, National has not announced its response.

## **2.2 Mokihinui River Hydro Dam hearings**

CORANZ wrote a submission and attended the hearing in Westport, opposing Meridian's consent application to build this sixty metre high dam across the lower gorge of the Mokihinui River, and flood 320 hectares of conservation land and legal road above it.

DOC opposed the Consent, with the best resources to collect and put scientific evidence. Fish & Game did not submit - a disappointing non-participation on top of its backdown over the Trustpower exploitation of the Arnold River, flowing from Lake Brunner.

Forest & Bird (Debs Martin, Nelson) did sterling service encouraging NGOs to oppose the dam, and in presenting a credible case against it. This dam would flood the largest area of native forest since the proposal to raise the level of Lake Manapouri. No decision has yet been made.

## **2.3 Nevis River Water Conservation Order**

CORANZ also submitted supporting this Fish & Game application to protect the Nevis River from damming, along with the Federation of Freshwater Anglers (NZFFA) and PANZ. In this case it was disappointing to note the Department of Conservation "doing a deal" with Pioneer Generation and therefore not opposing the planned exploitation.

DOC has done a similar back-room deal with Trustpower over Marlborough's Wairau River and withdrew its appeal to the Environment Court. With DOC indulging in wheeling and dealing with corporate power companies, the integrity of the department comes into question. DOC after all is a public service, funded by the taxpaying public, accountable and answerable to the public. Surely its duties include not only the conservation estate but free flowing public rivers that are habitat to both trout and native fish as well as native birds.

## **2.4 NGO Wild Rivers Coalition campaign advocating for Wild Rivers**

Forest and Bird's Debs Martin admirably and competently organised this two-day meeting of NGOs at the National Kayak School in Murchison, just before Easter 2009. Some ten NGOs, including F&G, NZFFA, Jet Boating NZ, CORANZ (Hugh Barr), Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC), ECO and various white-water canoeing groups attended.

The key vision and messages of the **Wild Rivers Campaign** are:

- *Wild rivers are not renewable. NZ's remaining wild rivers must be protected for future generations as national treasures.*
  - *Wild rivers need the same protection as National Parks.*
  - *NZ's energy future does not need to sacrifice our remaining wild rivers.*
  - *Wild rivers are free to be enjoyed by everyone.*
  - *NZers are passionate about wild rivers, which are central to our national identity and international reputation.*

CORANZ and some of our member associations have joined the Campaign.

## **2.5 St James Conservation Area inspection and future use**

CORANZ attended the 8 October 2008 ceremony where former Prime Minister Helen Clark announced Government's purchase of St James, at 78,000 ha, the largest and one of the most isolated pastoral leases.

Recreational stakeholders, including many CORANZ members, NZDA, NZFWD Assn, PANZ, attended a two day inspection of the eastern side of the property at the beginning of December 2008. There was a

consensus, (apart from Forest and Bird and the Canterbury Conservation Board who favoured locking many recreational activities out by making it another national park), that this was a great opportunity to allow many of the recreational activities not normally favoured by DOC or Forest & Bird eg mountain biking, horse trekking, 4WD-ing, recreational hunting (deer, chamois), trout and salmon fishing, even grazing by livestock, wild horses etc.

The future use of this area is open to submission until 14 September 2009. CORANZ is supporting a broadly recreational conservation park for the whole area. Much of the area is of vegetation types already well represented in the 3.1 million Ha of the present national parks. Mountain and valley systems are excessively over-represented in the national parks. Much of St James is inappropriate for national park status in any case.

## 2.6 Pastoral lease tenure review changes

National has reversed all of the policies that Labour introduced to get better outcomes for the public from tenure review, including returning to peppercorn rentals for leases worth tens of millions of dollars. At best this is favouritism. The Government sees its friends, the 230 remaining lessees, as needing government financial help. This is surprising for a government set on removing subsidies etc from the poor.

National have rescinded all ten Labour goals for tenure review, including the goal of setting up conservation parks.

They have set the "End Outcome" they say they are trying to achieve of putting Crown Pastoral leases to "the best use for New Zealand via stewardship, economic use, and relationships".

National has also removed the moratorium on lakeshore leases going through tenure review, so allowing subdivision of lakeshore frontages, to assist these struggling millionaire lessees. Elsewhere **many sheep farmers are struggling--wool \$3kg compared to possum fur \$110 kg!**

CORANZ is concerned at National's about face, and has written to Associate Conservation Minister Kate Wilkinson pointing out the uselessness of covenants for outdoor recreation as they have no public access or management. Also that there is major national benefit from having more tussockland conservation parks.

## 2.7 Water and allocation

Water has become the liquid gold and a gold rush mentality exists in some regions for water rights. While water does add value to land, a close watch must be kept on the right wing concept of tradable water rights where water can be sold or bought at will, akin to the tradable quota system in sea fisheries. Trading a resource inevitably results in monopolies through aggregation by wealthier players.

Tradable water rights have been disastrous for the resource overseas and New Zealand must not make the same mistake. The concept was originally proposed here by the Business Roundtable through it's off-shoot the Tasman Institute based in Melbourne. Support for the concept by a self-interested avaricious Business Roundtable should be a stark warning.

## 2.8 Toxins dangers

The 1080 issue, since the whitewash by the government's ERMA review, has been to the fore in news particularly with the production and public screening of the Graf Boys' excellent DVD **Poisoning Paradise – Ecocide in New Zealand**. DOC and the Animal Health Board continue to wastefully and stupidly bombard the countryside and public lands with 1080. Wastefully because in many areas possum numbers are naturally very light or even non-existent and stupidly because of the environmental damage to the ecosystem, invertebrates, native birds and the wild deer resource.

1080 is only part of the greater misuse of toxins. Another toxin, brodifacoum, the common ingredient in Talon and Havoc rat baits, freely available to anyone in shops, is a lethal poison similar to 1080 in its broad killing spectrum. Brodifacoum is slow killing, accumulative in a body and the cautionary period after use is 36 months compared to 1080's 6 months.

Wild pigs in the Marlborough Sounds are unsalable because of high brodifacoum residues. With both 1080 and brodifacoum all parts of an animal from meat to fur and skin remain toxic and unusable. With possum fur fetching \$110 a kg, the use of these poisons is a shocking waste of a national resource.

Similarly a mooted substitute for 1080 - zinc phosphide - is a horrific poison, burning the stomachs of animals that eat it. It has to be wondered at the mentality and inhumanity of persons in DOC and AHB who dream up the use of these damaging and cruel toxins.

## 2.9 Sea Fisheries

Option4 and other sea fishers' Councils' Kahawai Legal Challenge suffered a setback in the final appeal round. Nevertheless much was achieved in highlighting the greed and misuse of fisheries and the neglect by government of the public's right to catch a feed of fish. National groups took the challenge to the court but in particular, praise is due to option4 and the very competent and perceptive work by Trish Rea.

The Ministry of Fisheries proposed Vision for 2030 leaves a lot to be desired. The Ministry and past Ministers who at times have been woefully inept, still do not honour the Colin Moyle ministerial promise that the recreational fishing public's rights should be paramount in management.

Nor have they heeded the same message in the first round court victory of the Kahawai Legal Challenge. It is too early to judge the performance of National's Minister Phil Heatley. There are encouraging signs - he is a recreational fisher - that perhaps we may possibly have a minister who will give recognition to the public's traditional right to go and catch a feed of fish.

In Marlborough the Ministry's banning - against all logic and facts - blue cod fishing and set netting for moki and butter-fish was an affront to its statutory responsibilities to recreational fishing and to research and anecdotal evidence as well as widespread regional public opinion. CORANZ member Marlborough Recreational Fishers Association have mustered a good challenge to ministry stupidity and stubbornness.

## 2.10 Public Access to the Outdoors

CORANZ and its member associations, especially PANZ and NZDA, have continued to push for recognition of the public's legal rights to access the outdoors by legal roads, marginal strips, the Queen's Chain and other access instruments. This included opposing a road stopping (Akerbloms Road) that a subdivider sought from Marlborough District Council in Endeavour Inlet. The unformed road gives access to the foreshore, and could be used for boat access to the Inlet.

At a meeting with DOC we were disappointed to find that DOC had misunderstood Part 4 of its Act, re laying off marginal strips on leased land (Landcorp's Molesworth Lease) to find them under the illusion that the strips expired when the lease expired. The Strips are laid off once at a disbursement, and then exist until rescinded eg in a Reserves and Other Lands Disposal (ROLD) Act. It was also disturbing to find that between 1990 and June 2007, no marginal strips were marked on the national cadastral database, and were not specifically marked on the sketch map of lands disposed of by the Crown.

The **Walking Access Commission** had its Act significantly changed by the Select Committee, based on public submissions. It now covers walking access, and types of access that may be associated with walking access, such as access with firearms, dogs, bicycles, or motor vehicles, in the Purpose of the Act (Section 3). The functions of the Commission are broad, and the initial focus of only being concerned with NZ Walkways seems to have been dropped.

Unfortunately, the Commission comes under MAF and the MAF Minister. As is normal with MAF appointments, only people considered sympathetic to the rural community have been appointed. The broader recreational community is not adequately represented. CORANZ and some of its members met with the Walking Access Commission in December and July during the year, to provide feedback on the Commission's work.

## 2.11 Maori Treaty Claims

These are gathering pace, and are worrying in that public conservation land appears to be back on the Agenda as an inexpensive way of settling claims, outside the fiscal envelope. The **Central North Island Forests** deal did not take account of many sensible public access proposals eg to give adequate access across Kaingaroa Forest, or to leased lands in the area transferred. Until the new owners have established their management structure it is difficult to know how well these matters can be resolved.

Treaty claim settlements over Whirinaki Forest will involve local iwi Ngati Whare co-developing the management plan for the forest with DOC. This could be to the benefit of recreation, or against it. CORANZ will be watching and participating with interest. Similar concerns arise over proposed Treaty Claim settlements involving Kapiti Island, and Urewera National Park, and no doubt others still in the pipeline.

## **2.12 NGO-DOC national meetings**

These meetings every three months give NGOs a chance to ask DOC questions, and DOC to explain various new CMSs, Management Plans and policies to NGOs, and for both to gain feedback. They continue to be useful fora for discussing issues, though DOC management take no interest in them.

## **3 Government Agencies impacting on outdoor recreation**

Government departments and agencies provide the major threat to outdoor recreation in New Zealand. This is because of their ability to control ministers of both the left and right. They promote their own empire building desires, and sometimes those of their dominant pressure group, to the detriment of the public, the environment and New Zealand's supposed clean green marketing.

### **3.1 Department of Poisoning Conservation (DOC)**

DOC continues its direction towards being solely an eco-fundamentalist agency promoting solely native biodiversity as its reason for being. It has long lost interest in outdoor recreation, and now sees outdoor users only as a potential pool of free labour for introduced pest destruction.

Departmental programmes are aimed at capturing the minds and spare time of conservation land users for DOC's native biodiversity fetish, and its ridiculous goal of restoring the third of New Zealand it manages for the public to what it was before man arrived, minus the species such as moa and Haast's eagle that are now extinct.

DOC senior staff increasingly assume the Public Conservation Estate is theirs to experiment with irrespective of recreational use. It may be they see interfering with recreational use as one of their main objectives, as it competes with their own pseudo-religious biodiversity goals.

#### **3.1.1 DOC Poisonings**

Recent examples include DOC's extremely heavy aerial brodifacoum drops on Rangitoto and Motutapu in the Hauraki Gulf, killing lots of fish and seabirds in the process. There is also DOC Wellington's "Operation Kaka" proposal to plonk a 22,000 ha "Corridor" strip across the centre of the Tararua Forest Park, to be aerial 1080-ed every 3 years, to enhance native birds (the ones presumably the 1080 hasn't killed) and allow kakas to fly between the Kapiti Island kaka colony and the Mt Bruce one.

This cuts across important recreational hunting areas in the Mid Waiohine Totara Creek, Atiwhakatu and Carrington Stream. Tree-yearly aerial 1080 will make both deer and possum numbers vanishingly small, and probably wipe out more-porks and falcons as well.

DOC preparation of Conservation Management Strategies, the consultation documents where DOC sets out its management goals for lands it administers, has become a farce. DOC no longer sets out management goals, but fills these documents with waffle rather than facts.

After strong criticism from NZDA, CORANZ, FMC and NZ Alpine Club, some changes may have been in the offing. But with the splitting of the East Coast Hawke's Bay conservancy, all except the Waikato CMS are in recess for 3 or more years. A further example that DOC does not see its job as serving the public.

#### **3.1.2 DOC ecosystem services**

DOC is also under strong pressure from the National Government and the Minister of Tourism to allow exploitation of public conservation land for mining, energy generation, and tourism. To promote its chosen native biodiversity goals, DOC emphasises the "ecosystem services" it says it provides to the community.

Trouble is many of these are development options eg hydro development, provision of water that can harm the natural and scenic environments DOC is charged with protecting. Interestingly, harvesting possums and deer, as well as providing them to the community to hunt, also provide significant "ecosystem services", not what DOC had in mind.

#### **3.1.3 DOC Carbon storage**

Carbon storage is one such, where DOC has pushed killing deer, possums and pigs to "stop global warming" by creating vegetation thickets on the lands it administers. Such "carbon credits are "grey", and also very difficult to measure, and also very inefficient. If one really wants to sequester carbon, one can use fast growing exotic trees.

## **3.2 MAF Biosecurity**

MAF is making a plug to take over all pest control, including that on public conservation land. This would be an even bigger travesty than having DOC manage it. However it would split management and compromise adequate management of protected and introduced game species. MAF and its empire of agencies, including the Walking Access Commission, NZ Food Safety Authority, ERMA and possibly MfE primarily serve rural New Zealand, Federated Farmers and agricultural and forest exporters.

### **3.3 Ministry of Fisheries**

Is solely focussed on controlling New Zealand's fishery for the benefit of commercial fishers. It talks a lot about sustainability, as the fisheries collapse. It appears to consider its job is to transfer the recreational and indigenous fishery allocation to the commercial sector.

### **3.4 SPARC**

Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) and the Hillary Commission before it, has always seen itself as primarily an elite sport funding agency. It has always been unsympathetic to the volunteer recreation sector, allocating it only miniscule dollars. DOC has managed to transfer the idea of a national outdoor recreation strategy, proposed at the 2006 Outdoor Recreation Summit, to SPARC, to get rid of such a nasty (to DOC's philosophy) concept. Bravo DOC!

Consequently SPARC, after 2 years, has produced an unintelligible Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2009-2015 filled with vague concepts. About the only clear conclusion it comes to is that it will support trainers over the volunteer outdoor clubs that provide the majority of trips into the outdoors for the public. SPARC has long been captured by the trainers, many of whom prefer delivery of these services by SPARC itself. Not to say the volunteer sector doesn't need improvement. Just that SPARC appears to have very little interest in it, to the extent it actively undermines it with Government funds.

SPARC's Five Year Strategic Plan has more substance to it. CORANZ should engage with the SPARC Board in support of the volunteer sector.

### **3.5 Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA)**

ERMA was responsible for giving the tick to DOC and the Animal Health Board (AHB) to increased use of aerial 1080, regardless of the ramifications. This has continued New Zealand's reliance primarily on toxic poisons for managing species farmers and DOC don't like. ERMA, in its 2006 1080 review ignored the many submissions it received pointing out the faults with aerial 1080 use, it being an indiscriminate killer of all species, including invertebrates. It was originally developed as an insecticide, but killed everything. Not just insects.

The Graf Boys, a volunteer group, have recently produced their second DVD, Poisoning Paradise Ecocide New Zealand, which highlights the inadequacies of aerial 1080 use, and why no-other country uses it much. They have taken the concerns expressed to ERMA, and ignored by the ERMA lay Panel, and expand them into a compelling documentary, showing why it is unwise to use aerial 1080. The Graf Boys deserve our support for their professional but volunteer efforts.

### **3.6 Ministry for the Environment**

Has had two poor Chief Executives over the last eight years. Staff push the Government line. I am unclear what their role is. Administer the RMA. Also involved in water allocation and water right policy. The RMA has been gutted by the new Government.

The NGO-MfE meetings that used to be held every two months ceased some 5 years ago, and have not yet been re-started.

## **4 CORANZ**

It is vital CORANZ maintains its role. It is a valuable forum and the production of the election charter every 3 years is invaluable. There is a need, as always, to introduce younger people and plan succession. CORANZ should maintain its media profile to alert the outdoor public on issues.

### **4.1 Media**

CORANZ has maintained a steady public profile with media releases and letters to editor. While media releases are not always printed, letters to the editor, particularly in outdoor magazines usually are. Some may argue this is "preaching to the converted". But such letters are clipped and are seen by government departments and can end up on ministers' desks. And they serve a purpose in alerting the "sleeping giant" of over 800,000 outdoor recreationalists as to the issues and threats.

When such letters appear, the individual can play an invaluable part in writing in a letter of support. We need a ground swell on many issues. Apathy, indifference and inertia are the mortal enemies of the outdoor public.

## **4.2 Finances**

CORANZ income was \$3,007.02. Expenditure was \$2,849.75, primarily on travel. Surplus for the year was \$ 157.27, and accumulated funds at 30 June 2009 were \$7,820.02.

## **4.3 Building CORANZ's future**

It is vitally - yes vitally - important that succession is planned for CORANZ for the future. In short CORANZ must recruit new blood, give them experience and groom them for an active role in CORANZ perhaps to chairman level.

I know there are reasons with the "busyness" of today's life for many, young families etc. There is now sadly a focus on the individual rather than a collective, community one. But on the other hand, an active involvement in CORANZ takes relatively little time compared to other organisations.

For example CORANZ has one meeting a year-the AGM - the rest of the year, it is e mail or occasional tele-conference call. Hugh has borne the greater brunt of work and competently so. But the stark fact is a lot of the older hands are getting older and are pensioners - and more i.e. well over 65!!

Ideally younger blood recruited should be from the greater Wellington area (i.e. Manawatu-Wairarapa-Hutt-Wellington) as often individuals are needed to make up deputations to Parliament etc. When I say younger blood, I mean under 60 because we do need a good blend of experience and youth.

This should be no great task. Half a dozen, new, younger individuals, male or female would suffice. So I urge all member groups to proactively seek a recruitment of new blood. Don't just say "yeah, good idea". Let's do it.

## **4.4 CORANZ Outdoor Recreation Charter 2008 Election**

This three-yearly Election Charter is one of the most significant outputs from CORANZ. It considers the four main objectives of our constitution –

- 1 Protection and wise management of natural resources
- 2 Sustainable public ownership and management
- 3 Improving responsible public access
- 4 Creating a strong outdoor recreation user voice

The present Charter covers 21 policy areas, and over eighty specific policies to aid outdoor recreation. CORANZ and its members work with politicians and government agencies to achieve government adoption of these policies. They can be modified or added to at any time by the membership.

## **4.5 CORANZ Priorities for policy change**

Last year's top 11 priorities were:

- 1 Stop the privatisation and commercialisation of outdoor sports
- 2 Clean & healthy flowing rivers
- 3 Restore our grossly overfished sea fisheries to sustainability especially for recreation
- 4 Continue Pastoral Lease Tenure Review:
- 5 Stop large scale spreading of Toxins for "pest" control. Instead introduce harvesting regimes, where the animal has a market value.
- 6 Improve public access to the countryside
- 7 Management of Deer, Chamois, tahr and feral pigs as a valued resource
- 8 Develop an Outdoor Recreation Strategy with SPARC.
- 9 Methods of allocation of fresh water
- 10 Stop DOC's commercial carbon sequestration programme
- 11 Re-orient DOC to outdoor recreation

## **5 Conclusion and thanks**

Special thanks to Hugh Barr, our executive officer who has borne the brunt of work plus being advocate officer for NZDA. So much of CORANZ work falls on his shoulders to the admiration and appreciation of us all. Also special thanks to Tony Orman for last year's Charter, and for help with this Annual Report. Many thanks to member bodies, to Strato Cotsilinis for astute financial work, to co-chairman's Steve Veail and Ken Sims and to member groups.

**Steve Veail, Ken Sims** Co-Chairs

**Hugh Barr**, Secretary, **Tony Orman**, Media Officer

For the Council

**CORANZ** (The Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations of NZ) is the national association of seven major national outdoor recreation associations – New Zealand Federation of Freshwater Anglers, New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association, New Zealand Deerstalkers Association, Option4 – Recreational Sea Fishers' Trust, Public Access New Zealand, New Zealand Bowhunters Society, New Zealand Salmon Anglers Association; Jet Boating New Zealand, and the regional Marlborough Recreational Fishers Association.

CORANZ member associations have approximately 20,000 members, and represent one of the larger membership alliances of outdoor recreation associations in New Zealand. CORANZ advocates for facilitating and fostering outdoor recreation, and the related common interests of its member associations.