



Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations of New Zealand Inc

P O Box 1876 Wellington
Tel&Fax +64 4 934 2244
hugh@infosmart.co.nz
12 September 2010

CORANZ 14th Annual Report: July 2009 - June 2010

1. Introduction

Greetings CORANZ Member Bodies and delegates. CORANZ has again achieved a creditable year due to the untiring efforts of a few individuals - totally voluntarily it should be noted.

The issues for voluntary organisations like us are many, which at times makes it bewildering as to which takes priority. This is not helped by some sectors having inadequate advocacy, thus necessitating CORANZ stepping in to assist.

To name some of the issues in the past year:-

- Foreshore and Seabed
- Game Animal Council
- Trout farming
- Government moves to mine National Parks
- Water Conservation Orders which includes the government takeover of Environment Canterbury (ECAN) and consequences such as postponing the Hurunui WCO .
- The victory in the Nevis WCO (special thanks to Fish and Game Otago).
- The heli-hunting issue
- Access to public recreation
- Wild Animal Recovery Operations (WARO)
- Tenure Review
- Walking Access Commission
- New Conservation Parks
- Meridians Mokihinui hydro dam proposal
- Marlborough Sounds blue cod mismanagement

- Aerial 1080
- Water pollution and River Accords
- DOC's swing to commercialisation and privatisation
- General trends to privatisation via commercialisation

CORANZ is apolitical, i.e. it does not align itself to any political party, but that does not prevent it from criticising any government's policies. In our opinion, the current National-ACT-Maori party coalition government has shown little interest in protecting outdoor recreation. Indeed it has threatened to erode the public estate by trying to mine National Parks; by looking to commercialise the Dept. of Conservation and the estate it manages on our behalf; and by encouraging damming of rivers, either for "renewable energy" or to support increasingly intensive agriculture. It is now government policy (unannounced prior to the election) to industrialise, commercialise or sell as much aquatic resource and environment as possible.

Government is also increasingly using public conservation land as a cheap solution to Maori Treaty Claims. Rarely has a government been so hasty and so blatant in using public resources for political, business and transnational interests.

To be fair, government has agreed to a statutory Big Game Hunting Council being established through an advisory committee, largely because of United Future Peter Dunne's governance agreement. But the detail on the council is sobering with recreational hunting interests outvoted heavily by pro-commercial representatives from safari park, game estate, deer-farmers, Federated Farmers, Forest and Bird, DOC, Maori Affairs and others.

The 2008 Outdoor Recreation Charter, prepared by CORANZ last year, still provides helpful guidance about what policies CORANZ members wish from governments to enhance outdoor recreation. Unfortunately this Government does not appear to be interested in the public interest and recreation. Nevertheless the CORANZ Charter is invaluable and at some elections has been the only advocacy for the outdoor recreation public.

2. CORANZ work and submissions

Among the major issues CORANZ has been involved in during the year, submissions were made on the Game Council, proposals for kahawai management, and Marlborough Sounds blue cod management, opposing mining to schedule 4 conservation land, the 'restarting aquaculture' legislation, the Walking Access Commission and the Foreshore and Seabed.

Rather than deal at length with every issue and response (beyond the time and scope of this report), some of these are summarised below:

2.1 Public Foreshore and Seabed

The government is planning to repeal Crown ownership of the foreshore and seabed before Christmas to avoid an election year controversy. Their bill will be tabled in September and submissions called for. The four to six week submission period is the last opportunity for the public to have a say and to have any influence.

The foreshore and seabed is a massive resource that comprises around 10 million hectares – one third of the landmass of New Zealand. Horizontally it is the distance between the average spring high tide waterline and the 12 nautical mile territorial limit. Included are the beds of rivers that

belong to the coastal marine area. Vertically it is the airspace above this zone and the water, subsoil, bedrock and other matters like mineral wealth below.

The foreshore and seabed were vested in the Crown when New Zealand adopted British common law in the 1800s. As a result of a Court of Appeal decision in 2003, which was widely misrepresented to imply that Maori 'owned' the foreshore and seabed, the Labour Government affirmed Crown ownership through the 2004 Foreshore and Seabed Act.

The National Party is planning to repeal Crown ownership of the foreshore and seabed in favour of Maori interests. They believe this will cement a long-term relationship with the Maori Party.

Under National's proposal, Maori will be given effective ownership of the foreshore and seabed, not through a rigorous Court process but through negotiation with government Ministers. Their rights would include the power of veto over other coastal operators, and the potential for widespread development – resorts, mining, aquaculture, and so on.

CORANZ joined the Coastal Coalition opposing this legislation, with Hugh becoming their spokesman. This has proved a highly successful vehicle for increasing the awareness of this issue, and has just launched a highly visible billboard campaign. The Coastal Coalition website is a valuable repository of information and expert opinion on this issue. It has attracted support from a wide variety of New Zealanders and organizations.

The Government is trying to stop this campaign from gaining traction, despite evidence that access to beaches that are iwi controlled is already being compromised. CORANZ needs to be able to continue to move swiftly and vocally as this process unfolds.

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 metres 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. NGO's such as Forest & Bird have run a major public awareness campaign opposing this dam.

Despite this, consent has been granted for the dam but is subject to appeal. Environmental groups such as the Wild Rivers Campaign continue to vigorously oppose it and DOC and Forest & Bird have indicated that they would appeal the decision.

2.3 Wild Rivers Campaign

Mention must be made of the tremendous work of Forest & Bird's Debs Martin of Nelson in coordinating the Wild Rivers' Campaign. Wild Rivers is a coalition of Forest & Bird, CORANZ, NZFFA, Whitewater NZ, Rafting NZ, NZ Jetboat Assoc., Mountain Bike NZ, ECO, Federated Mountain Clubs, NZ Alpine Club, and F&G NZ. CORANZ and its member organizations are actively participating in and contributing towards its goals of raising awareness of the threats to specific wild rivers, and coordination actions against such threats. Wild Rivers covers any rivers whose beds and banks are not modified, farmed or otherwise changed.

Two meetings have been held in Wellington, along with several teleconferences. A Poster Display in Parliament is being organised to raise political awareness of the campaign.

There has also been a major victory over Pioneer Generation wanting to dam the Nevis with Otago Fish and Game and manager Niall Watson doing a great job. It was a victory but it was sobering in that the decision was based more on a native fish than a trout fishery and outdoor recreation. CORANZ submitted supporting this Fish and Game application to protect the Nevis River from damming, along with the Federation of Freshwater Anglers (NZFFA) and PANZ. Pioneer Generation have indicated that they are likely to appeal this decision.

2.4 Walking Access Commission

The Walking Access Commission has been launched and is up and running. CORANZ members attended the launch and have had subsequent meetings with Commission staff. As reported in last years report, unfortunately, the Commission does come under MAF, and the Agricultural Minister. However, it must be said that the Commission is working independently, and is currently correlating and publishing cadastral maps of the country, including identifying paper roads. This is despite spirited opposition from Federated Farmers who are trying actively to suppress such information (which is publicly available elsewhere anyway). The Commission's effectiveness at dispute resolution in terms of access issues has yet to be demonstrated.

2.5 Water Pollution and River Accords

There has been considerable awareness raised in the last 12 months over the pollution of waterways by both domestic and industrial waste, and by the results of intensive agriculture. This has been assisted by some high-profile examples. The Government have entered into (and funded) co-management of the Waikato River and its tributaries with Tainui. The goal is to stop and reverse the serious pollution of these waterways. This example is almost certain to be followed in other rivers and lakes, with the Whanganui the next most obvious choice.

Then there was the intensification of farming (including escalating dairying) in the Lake Taupo catchment, and the realisation that nitrogen pollution from this was starting to affect lake water clarity and purity, and would continue to do so for the next 40 years, even if such activity was stopped immediately. CORANZ members supported action on this issue. Again, there was spirited opposition from Federated Farmers to anything that might limit farming activities. It was finally agreed to limit such pollution by 20%. Whether this will have any effect on the continuing degradation of the Lake water remains to be seen.

Horizons Regional Council proposed a 'One Plan' to cover all consent processes for environmental protection of the regions natural resources, which CORANZ members also submitted on. This was also subject to a prolonged and vigorous campaign opposing it by Federated Farmers who objected to having fertiliser and effluent management plans imposed upon them, as well as having farming declared a permitted practice in environmentally sensitive areas. In the end, Horizons capitulated and removed almost all of the restrictions it had intended to implement to protect the natural environment from its final Plan.

A side issue of this process was the public identification of the pollution levels in the Manawatu River. Massey University released studies that showed the river to be more highly polluted than most other rivers in the world that had been tested by this specific methodology. This was again subjected to intensive opposition by Federated farmers, who tried to discredit both the results and those publishing them. Surprisingly, the resultant publicity ended with the main polluters of the river (rural, urban and industrial) meeting (in closed sessions) to try to address the situation. This culminated in the signing of an accord formally expressing their intentions to work on mitigating the pollution levels. Disappointingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, Federated Farmers (representing the largest group of polluters) walked away at the last minute, refusing to sign the accord.

It is of interest and relevance to CORANZ members that bodies such as Federated Farmers are, at a local level, proving hostile to public access to public resources such as waterways and the sportfish they contain, as well as the protection and mitigation of damage caused to them. Like DOC, there is an emerging vocal element within this organization, which regards sports fish as pests and refuses to engage or cooperate with the public's ability to fish for them.

It was equally disappointing to CORANZ members that the latest results of the Clean Streams Accord showed that despite the rhetoric and principles, the pollution of New Zealand's lowland rivers and fisheries by intensive agriculture had actually got worse. There were lots of dire words from politicians, plenty of excuses from agricultural representatives, and anger from other users of the resource; but did it spur a concrete plan of action to mitigate and rectify the problem? Yeah, right! It provides very little hope that the new Manawatu River Accord will actually achieve positive and meaningful results either, especially as one of the major polluters has tossed their toys out of the cot and wants to play by its own rules.

2.6 Access

Just as the issue of water pollution has been accentuated over the last 12 months, so has the whole issue of public access to the outdoors and public recreational resources. To an extent, this has ridden on the back of the Government's disastrous decision to mine schedule four public land. The resultant public outcry and an effective campaign opposing it by environmental NGO's including CORANZ, resulted in the government backing down and abandoning the proposal, at least for this term.

Given the current government philosophy of commercialisation both within and outside of the Conservation Estate, an increased difficulty in the free and unfettered access to public recreational resources by the sporting and recreational public is noticeable. Notable here are the vigilance, wisdom and accomplishments of Alan McMillan and Public Access NZ in safeguarding our access to public resources.

2.7 Sea Fisheries

CORANZ continued to work with option4 in their tireless promotion of the Kahawai and other sea fisheries, and access to such fisheries. It was one of a number of NGO's that make submissions on the government's 'Restarting Aquaculture' legislation. These submissions were pretty much ignored, as the government seeks to increase aquaculture production and revenue at any cost. The Marlborough Recreational Fishers Association continues to lobby and submit on the blue cod fishery, and fair, reasonable and sensible access to sea fisheries. CORANZ shares member groups concerns about the emphasis on finfish aquaculture proposals, when so much evidence and research from overseas identifies they are unsustainable, polluting and exhibit all of the characteristics and problems of any intensively farmed animals.

There is a growing momentum within recreational sea fishing groups for a single coordinated body to represent them. This may well be in response to the increasing pressure that commercial fishers are putting on stocks, and the scant regard with which Government and its agencies regard them. There seems to be a concurrent move for the implementation of a licensing system for saltwater recreational fishers. CORANZ has yet to be convinced that this would do anything other than support the bureaucracy that such a licence would spawn.

It is of interest to note that SPARC is also involved in recreational sea fishing, through the NZ Sport Fishing Council (formally the NZ Big Game fishing Council). Despite the name change,

there is no indication that it involves anything other than marine fishing. SPARC and the NZSFC have produced a Five 5 year strategic plan, which demonstrates that SPARC are using what is basically the same model that they used for amateur recreational sport within NZ. We would strongly advise caution over implementing this plan as sighted, and that those involved look long and hard at what it has done for amateur sporting codes first. SPARC, it would seem, only have one model, and it does not suit all.

2.8 Trout farming

Federated Farmers raised this thorny old issue again in a prolonged media campaign promoting the desirability to institute it. It seemed to coincide with the government's promotion of aquaculture. CORANZ members such as the NZFFA responded both publicly and by lobbying, opposing it. The promotion of the expansion of freshwater aquaculture appears to have subsided again, with emphasis being placed on marine aquaculture.

2.9 Toxins

CORANZ continues to be active in opposing the increasingly widespread and indiscriminate use of poison by government agencies to support their pest-control activities. Not only is the evidence and science that this seemingly self-sustaining process claims to be based on look increasingly suspect, but the culture of using it, particularly within DOC, appears to be growing alarmingly. Both in terms of the products it is prepared to use, and in terms of the species it is prepared to target.

The use of toxins by the Department of Conservation and its close associate the Animal Health Board has raised the ire of an increasing number of New Zealand citizens. The main focus has been on 1080 poison spread by DOC and the AHB, which has been shown to kill native freshwater species such as eels and koura. ERMA recently gave the go-ahead for trials of sodium nitrite, which the safety data sheet for, describes the toxin as "toxic to aquatic life and may cause long lasting effects in the aquatic environment." Another poison freely used is pindone for which the lethal concentration for rainbow trout is just .021 parts per million.

It now appears that eco-fundamentalists within the Department of Conservation plan to poison trout within the Karori reservoir, on the basis that they are 'introduced'. CORANZ views this as a direct assault on an established fishery, and the recreational values and opportunities of its members. It is part of an emerging trend that has no basis in logic or rational thought, and needs to be shown up for the emotive and unsubstantiated doctrine that it is.

2.10 Water and its allocation

As signalled in the last annual report, water has become seen as a liquid gold, and spawned a gold rush mentality among those who would use this public resource for private gain. The flawed thought that it is only of use if it is making someone money is not confined to industry and boardrooms, unfortunately it extends to Ministers of the Crown as well.

This saw the government sack the democratically elected Environment Canterbury and install government appointed commissioners to run the regional authority. It made no secret of the fact that it wanted to free up the use of water to irrigate intensive farming operations, regardless of environmental outcomes or recreational use of the resource. It sent a clear message to other regional authorities about what its priorities were, and what might happen if they weren't met. We are yet to see the results of this action in terms of a regional approach to water management, but we have no faith that they will enhance recreational opportunities.

Whilst the government has obviously made Canterbury a priority, other eastern regions are also being investigated in terms of water storage and intensively irrigated agriculture, particularly Hawkes Bay and Wairarapa.

DOC-NGO national meetings
Pastoral lease tenure review
Environmental Protection Agency
Heli-hunting

3. CORANZ

CORANZ continued to maintain its role over the last 12 months. This is mainly due to Hugh's untiring hard work and expert knowledge. CORANZ is a valuable forum for the promotion of outdoor recreation and sport, and a platform to address the concerns and aspirations of its members. It has also provided the opportunity for its members to liaise with and join other NGO's in specific campaigns, increasing the awareness, understanding and acceptance between such groups.

We have enjoyed the inclusion, input and assistance from the NZ 4 Wheel Drive Association and Jetboat NZ, as well as from our other member organisations. Unfortunately, during the year the NZ Deerstalkers Association left CORANZ. We were sorry to see them take this decision, we will continue to represent the interests of recreational hunters to the best of our abilities, and we would welcome them back should that be what they decide.

3.1 Media

CORANZ was also successful in maintaining its media profile over the past year. Again, this is mainly due to Hugh's efforts, with meetings, media releases, interviews and letters.

While it can be difficult to get media releases or even letters to editors published, letters to outdoor magazines usually are. While this could be seen as "preaching to the converted", it continues to get CORANZ and its member organisations recognised by the public. And such letters are often clipped and are seen by government departments and can end up on ministers' desks. There they serve as a reminder of 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 a letter of support. We need a ground swell on many issues. Apathy, indifference and inertia are the mortal enemies of the outdoor public.

CORANZ also established a web presence, with its own website (coranz.org.nz). A web presence is pretty much essential these days, and if we are really serious about capturing and including the general public, especially the younger recreationalists, we really need to be where they are, on the likes of face book and twitter, with wikis and blogs.

3.2 Finances

CORANZ income was \$3,007. Expenditure was \$2,658.74, primarily on travel. Surplus for the year was \$ 157, and accumulated funds at 30 June 2010 were \$19,212.90.

3.3 CORANZ Charter

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.

Given the importance of the upcoming election, and the number of challenges that current government policies are placing on outdoor recreation, it is important that member organisations review the content relevant to them and ensure they reflect their needs and aspirations.

3.4 Looking Back

Looking at the priorities identified at the last AGM, it is noted they were:

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

Allowing that circumstances and priorities will always change, a review of CORANZ actions and activities (above) will show that we have indeed been active on these issues, and have covered a remarkable breadth of advocacy, engagement and commentary.

3.5 Looking Forward

If we thought that the last twelve months was ‘full on’, with a right-wing market-driven government in full flight in its first term; the next twelve promises to be even more so. The range and depth of issues affecting the outdoor recreation activities that we represent promises only to multiply, as the unwelcome ethics of commercialisation of our public resources, and our chosen recreations continues. Where we were busy fighting fires before, those fires will just get bigger and more frequent, consuming more of our voluntary time and effort.

But always, where there are threats, there are opportunities. We are here to make a difference, and there is an election coming up. It is our opportunity to make that difference. Ensuring that our charter is up-to-date and relevant will be important, as will our contacts with politicians, influencers and policy-makers. More important will be the contact we have with our members and the public, and how we inform and influence their opinions. CORANZ is apolitical, but we must use the political system astutely to achieve our goals.

That means continuing our strong lines of communication with our member organisations, and facilitating the cross-fertilisation of ideas and effort as they see that others share their values, aspirations and goals. We need good people. We need more young people to complement the wise old heads we have. I encourage you to involve as many of your own members with motivation and drive as possible to participate and contribute to CORANZ and its work. There is more than enough to go round! And we can all only gain and grow from that happening.

4. Conclusion and Thanks

A special acknowledgement and thanks must go to Hugh Barr, our executive officer who does so much on so many issues. Who advocates eloquently, writes knowledgably and compellingly, communicates so effectively, and is a repository of CORANZ and outdoor recreation history, experience and progress. All who know Hugh admire the dedication, sacrifice and sheer hard work he gives so freely.

A special thanks too, to Tony Orman, who is so knowledgeable, untiring and determined in his advocacy, and who handles media releases, letters and documentation with an assured ease. And to Alan McMillan, for his wisdom, and his unstinting efforts on public access, and Strato Cotsilinis for his financial assistance and many and varied contributions to the issues and debates that surround us.

This is Ken's final year as Co-Chairman of CORANZ, as per its constitution. He has immensely enjoyed the experience, the people he has had the opportunity to meet and get to know, and the issues that he has had the opportunity to help tackle. Part of that experience tells him that it seems very difficult to completely leave this organisation, so he looks forward to continuing to contribute in some small way in the future.

Ken Sims
Tony Orman
Co-Chairs CORANZ

Hugh Barr, Secretary