



## **Government Track Record on Outdoor Recreation 'Disappointing'.**

A national outdoor recreational advocacy forum, the Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations of NZ (CORANZ) has rated government performance on outdoor recreation and conservation as poor.

The "disappointing" assessment is contained in [an election charter](#), which CORANZ has prepared for the past four elections.

Co-chairman Tony Orman of Marlborough said over the last three years, policies and actions showed a tendency to prefer short run profits to long run necessities.

"Economics are vital, but so too is quality of life and the environment for the public."

He stressed CORANZ was "apolitical" and each year candidly assessed government performance in the outdoor recreation-conservation area. In 2008 it was a Labour-led government under critical scrutiny.

Recent successive governments have made much of the "clean and green" and "100 percent pure" for tourism and export markets.

"Sadly there's a considerable degree of hypocrisy by government," said Tony Orman. "CORANZ does not believe that outdoor recreation, environmental and conservation values should be at the expense of an ideologically driven and poorly managed economy."

Many New Zealanders participate in outdoor leisure whether walking, tramping, fishing, hunting, driving, surfing, canoeing, mountain biking or other activity. Estimates indicate more than one million New Zealanders have an active outdoor recreational interest.

"New Zealanders greatly value the right to enjoy outdoor recreation, as part of the "Kiwi" quality of life. Outdoor recreation is a major component of the Kiwi psyche," said Tony Orman.

Asked as to particular areas where government rated poorly Tony Orman listed government plans to privatise the "public commons" in the foreshore and seabed

legislation and allowing public rivers to be used by private corporate companies and SOEs to generate private profit above public conservation and recreational values.

Others listed included government dictatorial dismissal of Environment Canterbury Regional Council councillors and replacement with government picked appointees, poor environmental standards with resulting of river pollution, public access and unnecessary and increased use of poisons such as 1080 and brodifacoum.

A recent development was the Department of Conservation opting for business deals at the expense of its core function of conservation and recreation.

"The acronym DOC is now being labelled as "Department of Commercialisation," he said.

DOC in pursuing a commercialisation agenda has encouraged commercial helicopter big game hunting for valued species such as deer, tahr, chamois and others and ignored its obligations to recreational hunting. Other privatisation of public recreation included game bird shooting and exclusive capture by commercial interests of prize trout streams.

Tony Orman said the "pest syndrome" was to the fore with Canada Geese now labelled a pest by Conservation Minister Kate Wilkinson.

"Canada geese should have remained a game bird with high country farmers given carte blanche powers on their own land."

Recreational sea fishing with about a million Kiwis enjoying it was under threat by policies of Fisheries Minister Phil Heatley with restricting only recreational fishing, cutting bag limits while not reducing commercial catches.

Looming is the privatisation ideology espoused by the current National-led government.

"Typical was the proposal to mine National Parks. Selling power stations is another - and they require the use of public water. Crown-owned exotic forests have been sold off with traditional public access to outdoor recreation, eroded or curtailed."

Water had also undergone massive privatisation by private power companies for electricity generation while draw-offs for large scale irrigation and monocultures of exotic pines, have depleted water flows.

"As a result public rivers such as in Canterbury now cease flowing to sea."

The former National government's "Bradford energy reforms" have put wild rivers such as the West Coast's Arnold, Mokihinui and Marlborough's Wairau are at risk from hydro-electricity exploitation. Others such as Murchison's Matiri and Matakītaki and Otago's Nevis are under threat too. Other rivers are being eyed up.

"All in all, given government policies and actions, it's a bleak outlook."

Tony Orman said voters should bear in mind the threats at election time especially with their party vote.

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