

Minutes of the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Operational Liaison Group Annual Meeting

Held in Bay of Plenty Regional Council corner Fenton and
Pukaki Streets, Rotorua,

On Wednesday 21st June 2023 commencing at 10:00 am

Chair: Jim Stanton

Present: J Stanton (JS) (Chair), M Stanton (MS) (Ngāti Pikiao and Okawa Bay Resident), P McCormick (BOPRC), J Randell (Lakes Operations BOPRC), A Tahana (AT) (Ngāti Pikiao), R Pitkethely (RP) (RLC), E Cawte (EC) (RLC), C Bates (CB) (RLC)

Apologies: G O'Rourke (BOPRC), A Bruere (BOPRC)

1 Karakia

Jacquie Mackle opened the meeting with a Karakia at 10:07am.

2 Introductions and Welcome

Jim Stanton (JS) opened the meeting and invited attendee introductions. Condolences to Michael Gill, long standing member of this group, who had recently passed away.

3 Apologies

G O'Rourke (BOPRC), A Bruere (BOPRC).

Apologies moved and seconded by EC and PM

4 Minutes from Previous meeting and matters arising

Minutes of Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Operational Liaison Group Annual Meeting held 7th July 2022 be confirmed as true and correct record.

Minutes have been circulated, and available on the BOPRC website.

Moved: PM

Seconded: JR

CARRIED

5 Matters arising

JS brings up Matt Pearson comments last year, Issues with Lake Rotorua, he asked EC if there was a meeting that had occurred here with BOPRC and RLC concerning stormwater consents, there are outstanding issues here because of the high lake level.

Issues were raised by GM Michael Gill last year around gate settings for rafting. The flowrate range for rafting is 13- 26 cumecs, however rafters do go over 26 cumecs, Sam Sutton brings up in last year's meeting that the rafters do raft up to 26.6 cumecs. JS asked if the 13-26 cumecs

range can be amended to approximately 13-26 cumecs in the Operation Management Plan to be approximately not specific, follow up perhaps for GO.

JS brings up the attendees and would like a copy of the new updated email list. MA to send JS a excel worksheet with emails to look at and take off email bounce backs.

6 Election of Chairperson

JS was hoping this would be his last year as chair, JS comments that there are a lot of baches and absentee owners around Rotoiti and the chair should ideally live locally, but under the Terms of Reference cannot be from Kaitiaki groups.

JS can do five years if necessary, this is his fourth year next year will conclude the five years as chair.

JS was nominated

Moved: PM

Seconded: JR

CARRIED

7 Consent Holder Annual Report on Okere Gates (RC65979) and Ohau Weir (RC65980) – July 2022

PM opens with her presentation of the Consents report.

Object of the presentation is to cover the summary of the Annual report.

Stoplogs were removed 9th June 2022, and last installed on 17 October 2018.

Okere gates consent, priority for Lake Rotoiti is water quality, lake level control.

1m differential between Lake Rotorua and Rotoiti.

On average there was double the water going down the Ohau channel compared to previous year because of weather conditions.

One consent change, Application to undertake 'low lake level trial' hearing was approved September 2022, this was not done and will be attempted the next autumn.

PM shows the lake levels (Page 13) Lake level Rotoiti & Rotorua.

Lake levels have increased because of two cyclones and heavy rain warnings.

P17 lake levels and rainfall, high rain fall started in June 2022 and continued throughout the year.

Rotoiti is able to be managed within tighter range because greater control of the outflow i.e. more can go out of the Okere Gates.

Consented 65979 Flow rate conditions, key points in the report brought up here.

Recreational river flows 2022/23 period – 55.3%

JS commercial rafters have promoted opening the gates in the night-time, and closing during the day this has been declined by BOPRC on the grounds of river bank stability, and priority requirement for inflow/outflow regime.

Inflows and outflows – 6 hourly with the outflow greater than the inflow.

Managing the gates, to manage the lake levels which has been more challenging from June.

Discussion was had that the consent conditions seem to have administrative errors, paragraphs have been repeated, this should be rectified.

7.1 Operations

No issues

7.2 Environmental challenges

High rainfall – high inflows and – high lake levels.

7.3 Consultation

Maintaining discussions between the stakeholders.

8 Concerns and complaints

AT enters the room 10:38am.

High rainfall and high lake levels from June 2022.

Rafting restrictions have been ongoing.

When opening gates the Okere gates are opened after dark, this is a safety measure acknowledging most people are off the river after dark.

No complaints.

EC asks a question re: High Lake levels, RLC have consents and have concerns about the structures around the lakes and the stormwater is overwhelmed. This is exacerbated by the high lake levels, there is intense scrutiny from BOPRC, EC would like to know the role of the regulatory arm of BOPRC, do they only raise issues when a complaint is made or do they actively interact with the operational arm about the non-compliance.

PM believes there has been no breach of the consent condition – maximum operation level under extreme weather events.

EC suggests the only suggestion would be to upgrade which may not be possible, and a very large expense.

RLC have a 60-million-dollar upgrade planned to the wastewater plant.

JS operation has been adhered to in accordance with the consent conditions to his knowledge, he suggests that RLC notify the regulatory arm of BOPRC that problems have arisen because of extreme weather events.

JS mentions that the lake levels are reaching the late 60's- early 70's extreme levels.

AT asks why the gates are opened at night-time, what is the reason behind this PM explains that when gates are opened, they are opened at night-time for safety reasons.

RP asked a question regarding Figure 13, Why the Kaituna flow is held at 26 cumecs? PM explains that it allows more water down the Kaituna, and it meets the consent conditions of maintaining lake level within specified range and the flowrate conditions.

PM explains the gates were closed for the rafters, closed on the weekends, when possible, then opened then to relieve the high lake level.

JS explains that GO has tried to accommodate the rafters as much as possible and that the inflows and outflows have been maintained, there has been efforts to try and accommodate the rafters but has been difficult because of the extreme weather events.

JS Ōhau Channel flows have natural restrictions.

JS mentions that there have been some recent reports on the Ohau diversion wall breaches.

8.1 Investigations and monitoring

Regular inspections are done, staff gauges, jetties, erosion, beaches and flooding issues.

Surveys were completed and there was little change within the channel.

Diversion Wall was strengthened in 2022 and inspection was completed May 2023.

JS noted there was conversation within the community and council that there are several holes and corrosion issues in the wall and there is some reflux, this has been around for about 9 years. AB is currently looking to resolve this.

Hinehopu Wetlands behind Tamatea Street have been high, this wetland takes longer time for the water level to lower than the lake after rainfall.

Weed control - Okawa Bay, looking to start this process earlier, potentially two herbicide applications before summer.

8.2 Summary

Priority remains maintaining water quality of Lake Rotoiti.

RLC asks are they aware if BOPRC has a strategic view on the lake levels if the extreme weather events continue.

Justine looking at the Rotomā Lake around the campground, and she confirms that there are discussions being had on a Strategic level.

Low lake level trial was initiated by Ngāti Pikiao to meet their cultural management plan and has been proposed as a change in the consent conditions, this has not been able to happen because of the high rainfall, may look at doing this after Easter next year, it will be a one off and only 5 days, Page 43 of the conditions.

AT mentions that the Ngāti Pikiao used to have quite a lot beaches and fishing grounds, with the gates giving us the ability to hold the lake level higher this is now all gone.

Recommendation from AT for a graph of the correlation in gate levels and lake levels going over a year, perhaps on the website.

JS would like to promote this on future reports, a graph that shows the gate openings and the flow rates at the same time as showing the in - out flows.

No further comments from PM report.

9 General Business

JS noted that the revised Consent Conditions as a result of the recent Variation contained administrative errors and had originally been triplicated. They appear to have been corrected for this Report except on Page 42, 7.4 He notes that D & E have been duplicated, JS has had communication with BOPRC on this matter and they advised there will be a correction done. JS

suggests that the consent should be on the BOPRC website he would like them to be available and correct and updated.

Rob exits the meeting 11:15am.

JS last meeting on page 51, 14.1 Hinihopu investigations remove and replacing them with different methods of weed removal, with steam rather than chemicals. JS asks if there has been any progress here and would like an update on this.

AT asks about the wetland high level and PM confirms that there is a staff gauge located in the wetland and it is being monitored and if there is movement on clearing the wetland outlet/drain this would need to be consented.

Hinehopu Investigation consent condition 14.3 groundwater analysis report, where is this progressing to, JS would like an update.

JS refers to Page 53 advice notes number 2, questions the email address (notify@envbop.govt.nz) he would like to know if this is the current email, if it covers any notifications specific to this consent or general notifications for BOPRC.

Justine confirms this email is current for all BOPRC notifications.

JS asks if there are any issues with the Kaitiaki groups.

AT says that the only issues are the lake levels, and he questions the gates, PM shows him the graph and explains further.

JS mentions that the gates have been open most of the time, in recent months, AT mentions that the Iwi has been confused by the communication around this and would like them to be clearer about the opening and closing of the gates, JS explains further about the gates.

RLC has good dialog with BOPRC he notes there are infrastructure issues and are working through these.

10 **Closing/Poroporoaki**

AT closes the meeting

Meeting ended: 11.39am

Next meeting: June 2024