

# Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Operational Liaison Group Annual Meeting

## Minutes

28 May 2024 - 10am

**Attendees:** Jim Stanton (Chair), Mary Stanton, Joe Tahana (Ngāti Pikiao Environmental Society), Nick Chater, Sam Sutton (Rotorua Rafting), Blue Mathison (Kaituna Cascades), Justin Hutton (River Rats).

**Bay of Plenty Regional Council staff in attendance:** Kerry Smith, Penny MacCormick, Andy Bruere, Graeme O'Rourke, Justine Randell, Helen Creagh.

**Apologies:** Arapeta Tahana, Dan Batten (Bay of Plenty Regional Council).

## Meeting Agenda

**Karakia and welcome** – Jim Stanton and Joe Tahana.

**Minutes of previous meeting held 21 June 2023** – Jim provided a verbal summary of the minutes. Joe moved that the minutes were adopted and they were adopted unanimously.

**Election of Chair** – Jim confirmed that he was coming to the end of his 5-year term as Chair of Group. Jim moved that Nick Chater becomes the new Chair of the Group and Justin seconded that motion which was adopted unanimously. The Group congratulated Nick on his appointment.

### Actions from previous meeting:

- **Location of updated consent conditions**

Up to date consent conditions available on Regional Council website:  
<https://atlas.boprc.govt.nz/api/v1/edms/document/A4364401/content>

- **Updated e-mail list**

Penny has considered the list and removed duplicates, acknowledged that all are welcome to receive the emails but we need to make sure that key Groups are included in the list, according to resource consent conditions, including Ngāti Pikiao, Tapuika, Regional Council, rafting community etc. Ongoing review of list required. Noted that Tapuika aren't here but Regional Council has been liaising with them separately.

**New Action** - Penny to check that Tapuika Iwi Authority office address email is included on email list, not just individuals. Also check email address matches with that specified in the consent conditions.

- **Graphs to demonstrate Gate Setting vs flow and Gate Setting vs Lake Level**

Two graphs were provided with Agenda. Graphs can be added to the Environmental Data portal to suit what is desired by the Group and any particular requests can go through Penny.

## **Agenda Items**

### **Rotoiti Low Lake Level Trial**

Update provided by Andy and Graeme. Noted that consent for this trial was granted approximately 18 months ago resulting from Ngāti Pikiao's request for one off trial as part of their Cultural Management Plan prepared in accordance with the consent conditions. The Hearing Commissioners have directed the trial occur by natural means, i.e. when the lake gets close to that level naturally at any time, this is expected to occur during drought driven years. The trial obviously wasn't possible in the last couple of summers due to very high rainfall. The aim is to witness what the low lake level provides in terms of beaches which is the desire of Ngāti Pikiao. Mary noted that around Mourea last year the water levels were higher than they have ever been.

### **Update on Rotoiti Wall**

Andy provided an update on the corrosion of the Ōhau Wall, the cause and mitigation of corrosion and then management plan to make sure the wall lasts its intended lifespan. This work started with the installation of walers to protect the king piles. The leakage through the wall compromises its core function, Greenfield diving have trialled moulded plastic sheets. The Regional Council are still working through solutions with engineers and Greenfields to improve the viability of the fix solution with further trials and the aim of a fix in Year 2 of the Regional Council's Long-Term Plan. Noting that this budget can be brought forward to Year One of the Long Term Plan if a fix is proven quicker. The maintenance and monitoring plan includes a 3-year dive inspection with ultrasonic measurement – to determine extent of corrosion. In response to questions Andy noted that there is a significant amount of water coming through the corrosion of the wall that could compromise water quality, as per work recently done by University of Waikato.

**New Action** - for Andy to place water quality modelling report for Ōhau Wall on Regional Council website and circulate link to Group.

### **Okawa Bay Weed Control**

Update from Andy provided. Noted that approach to weed control in the Bay in the past may have contributed to algae blooms, due to decaying weed from spraying. Regional Council have worked with community to look at other options including earlier spraying (which wasn't determined to be suitable last year due to condition and low growth of weed). Later in summer some weed harvesting was also undertaken – but very little weed was available for harvest. Endothall trial is planned for Okawa Bay in November, to determine if this will be an effective systemic spray for the lakes/Okawa Bay.

### **Hinehōpu Wetland Report**

Andy provided overview of issues being experienced by houses at Tamatea Street adjacent to Hinehōpu Mire and noted that he and Graeme had agreed to clear drain to help water get out more easily. However, to do this they took advice from the Regional Council's consents team and were advised that it required a significant consenting process to achieve this due to the wetland

values, this isn't feasible for Regional Council to pursue on behalf of the residents. Consistently the wetland water levels on average about 300mm above the lake level which means that the water cannot get out quick enough to drain – the drain is silted, overgrown and congested. Also noted by Joe that this end of the lake is sinking and that the Te Tāhuna Trust houses will be under an increased risk of flooding.

**New Action** – for Andy to circulate advice he received on the consent process.

### **Strategic view on high lake levels**

Helen provided an update on the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group response to the record high lake levels last year. Note that the Strategy Group has established a Technical Working Group to advise it of long-term measures to protect lakeside communities from the effects of climate change, which will include fluctuating lake levels and increased rainfall intensity.

### **Consent Holder Annual Report**

Penny provided a powerpoint presentation outlining her annual report regarding the management of the Okere Gates and the Ohau Weir, as required by the conditions of the resource consent. The Annual Report presents her analysis of the gates management against the condition of the resource consent and presented this to the Group to demonstrate compliance with those. Her presentation is outlined in the attached slides.

Mary thanked the Regional Council for the rock work on the Ōhau Channel in front of Te Taakinga marae.

### **Environmental Data Portal demonstration**

The Group received a presentation from Craig Putt on the Regional Council's Environmental Data Portal, to seek feedback on what is useful and helps in their daily work. The Portal information can be adjusted as requested to be more useful. Craig gave an overview of the Managing Lakes Levels – Rotorua and Rotoiti– draft updates to the portal to provide specific information on rainfall, gate settings and lake levels for these lakes. This is a Dashboard type portal. <https://envdata.boprc.govt.nz/Data/Dashboard/168>

Requested that members provide feedback to Craig or Penny on any amendments they would like to see. Members would like to see data on inflow from tributaries/ groundwater inflow affecting levels in Lake Rotoiti, it was noted the Regional Council does not have this data.

### **General Business**

The Group received a request from rafters to plan for intense rainfall events by taking the lake to the lower limit as much as possible to gain storage and provide more financial security for their business, i.e. take lake down towards bottom of authorised operating range to provide storage. Penny and Graeme happy to talk about this at the time decisions are made about adjustments so encourage members to raise that with them at the time.

Noted that the Consent includes a review condition which enables the conditions to be reviewed following completion of the low-level trial work. Noted that rafters would be supportive of the review in looking at lowering the lower operating range limit below 279.1m.