

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of an application pursuant to Section 201 for a Water Conservation Order on the Hurunui River.

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE STEPHEN BRUCE GURNEY ON BEHALF OF  
RECREATIONAL AND COMPETITIVE KAYAKERS  
(NZRCA and Steve Moffat)  
27 March 2009**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Qualifications and Experience**

1. I have been kayaking for 30 years, beginning as a 15 year old in the Boys Brigade, to the Auckland University Kayak Club, and then the University of Canterbury Canoe Club ("UCCC"), instructing as an instructor in the UCCC, competing in slaloms and down river races before becoming a professional NZ multisport/adventure athlete for 15 years, racing domestically in almost every multisport kayaking event in New Zealand, becoming the South Island Down River Racing champion one year, and also winning many International Adventure races, all of which have significant white water kayaking as part of the course.
2. I am a mechanical engineer (BE mech), and in a dual capacity as engineer and recreationist, I prepared a report on the recreational values that could be built in to the Proposed Central Plains irrigation dam at Coalgate.

### **Evidence**

3. I have been asked by the NZRCA, and Steve Moffat (an individual submitter) to present evidence in support of the application to protect the Hurunui River.
4. As a professional athlete, I came to have an intimate appreciation for the wilderness we are so lucky to still have in NZ. I travelled the world visiting the backcountries of

many countries, and quickly gained an immense appreciation for the untouched nature of our back country. It is a huge asset. Once modified, it will never be the same.

5. As a professional athlete, I have visited NZ's most sought-after and important recreational spots. The Hurunui is one of these beautiful resources. Once lost we are the poorer as a nation.
6. As an adventurer, I have been studying the trips and adventures of our pioneering forebears, the Park Brothers, Marmaduke Dixon, George Mannering, Davey Gunn and the likes. Dixon and Mannering attempted to climb Mount Cook in 1891 prior to the first successful ascent and proceeded to paddle Rob Roy canoes to the coast via the Pukaki and Waitaki Rivers. Gunn lost his life on the Hollyford river. It is inspirational indeed to trace their adventures.
7. We have found their trips to be extremely inspirational to many folk, and it is a shame to destroy the heritage of their journeys.
8. With my co-adventurer, Steve Moffatt, I recently re-enacted a famous, historic trip of George and James Park from 1889. George Park was an early pioneer and an extraordinary kayaker. On more than one occasion he paddled across the Hokitika bar and unaccompanied made the 60 mile journey down the coast to Okarito to woo his future wife. He also made the first crossing of Cook Strait in wooden Rob Roy canoes with his brother William( George and James hauled two heavy canoes up the Taramakau river and over Harper Pass into the head waters of the Hurunui which they descended from source to the sea. We have made a documentary of our journey which made the finals of the (Wanaka) International Mountain Film Festival, and has shown in numerous film festivals since.
9. Our re-enactment of the Park Brothers Coast to Coast trip over Harper pass has enabled us to produce a documentary that shows the lifestyles and attitudes of the folks of those times and the differences to our lifestyles. Many of us have been surprised by what we found. The trip took 13 days and travelled from Jacksons Pub, up the Taramakau river, over Harper Pass down the Hurunui to the east coast, finishing in Lyttelton. I would like to present this documentary, and anybody can view it anytime on youtube:

Part 1

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dc2wiclqQi8>

Part 2

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Er4kcMSZApI>

Part 3

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-c3hH3mO6U>

10. The Hurunui is steeped in history. The Maori travelled along its banks journeying to the West Coast for greenstone, the gold miners followed their tracks in the 1860's and Harper Pass was used to transport cattle to the West Coast later that century.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

11. As an athlete, it would be devastating to loose the rapids of the Hurunui.
12. As an adventurer, we will be the poorer to lose the wilderness of the Hurunui. It also has valuable historical value that we cannot afford to lose.
13. As an engineer having done a comprehensive recreational report on the Central Plains irrigation dam proposal, I have developed an opinion that it is unsustainable and fool-hardy to modify river valleys. There are better ways to achieve power and irrigation.

### **CONCLUSION**

14. Do not modify or dam the Hurunui

**27<sup>th</sup> March 2009**