

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.

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE JONATHON WILLIAM LINDSAY HAY ON BEHALF OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY CANOE CLUB AND THE NEW ZEALAND
RECREATIONAL CANOEING ASSOCIATION**

Introduction

1. My name is Jonathon William Lindsay Hay. I have lived in Christchurch since 2003. Before 2003 I lived in Geraldine and Blenheim. I studied at the University of Canterbury from 2003 to 2007 towards degrees in Forestry and Geography. I took a year off in 2006 kayak instructing and travelling in the U.S.A. and Canada. I now work as a retail salesperson in Christchurch selling fishing equipment and as a fly fishing guide for Backcountry New Zealand. I also represent the University of Canterbury Canoe Club where I am currently club president.

Qualifications and Experience

2. I started kayaking in 2000 and joined the University of Canterbury Canoe Club in 2003. I have been on the committee since 2004. In 2005 I was elected club captain and in 2008 began a two year term as club president. I have also spent time as safety officer, conservation officer and instruction officer at the University of Canterbury Canoe Club. My role as president is to oversee the running of the club which has around 120 members. The club's members cumulatively spend well over a conservative estimate of 100 days per year on the Hurunui River, particularly the sections between Jollie Brook and the Hawarden Gap.
3. I learned to kayak primarily on the Hurunui River and have paddled various sections of the river from the Sisters Stream swing bridge to the bottom of the Hawarden Gap in excess of 250 times since first paddling on the river in 2002. These descents have ranged in flow from 15 cumecs to 650 cumecs on the Manadamus flow gauge.
4. I have kayaked over 100 different rivers in the North and South Islands of New Zealand, the U.S.A. and Canada. The sections I have paddled range in difficulty from grade 1 to grade 5+ and have included rivers that are low volume with steep gradients through to very large volume rivers.
5. I have been a part of teams that paddled the Mason River in Canterbury in 2007 and the Big River (Kahurangi National Park) in 2007, both of which are widely acknowledged as first descents.
6. I have fly fished since 1995. This fly fishing has been predominantly restricted to New Zealand's South Island Rivers where I have fished over 50 rivers spread throughout

all districts. The bulk of my fishing days have been spent on Canterbury's mountain rivers with the Hurunui being the river that I have fished and guided on the most.

Scope of Evidence

7. The evidence I will present is in support of a Water Conservation Order for the Hurunui River.
8. I will present evidence detailing why I believe the Hurunui River has outstanding recreational value for white water kayaking, trout and salmon fishing.
9. I will present evidence relating to my personal connection to and experiences on the Hurunui River gained from kayaking and fishing the river.

Summary and Conclusions

10. The Hurunui River is an outstanding recreational resource for white water kayaking. This is due to its proximity to a major residential area, accessibility to the river, range of paddlable flows, consistency of paddlable flows and choice of river stretches of varying difficulty.
11. The Hurunui River is an outstanding recreational resource for trout and salmon fishing because of its proximity to a major residential area, accessibility to the river, proximity to other waterways of different character and ability to sustain high angling pressure.

Personal Connection to the Hurunui River

12. The first time I paddled the Hurunui River was in 2002 when a friend and I made a trip from Geraldine to paddle the Maori Gully section. This was to be my second Grade 3 river trip and we set off with great trepidation. On the way down we scouted each of the major rapids for hazards and eventually emerged at the take out point after about four hours (the river can be paddled in around 30 minutes at this flow). The river flow was 17 cumecs. This trip challenged me and gave me a yard stick against which I could evaluate future improvement.
13. At the time the Maori Gully section of the Hurunui was at the top end of my ability but the relatively short length of the section, low flow, proximity to the road and range of exit points from the river meant that the river was a viable option for my friend and I to test our skills and progress our paddling. It was the best suited river for us to test ourselves on, which is why we drove over 3 hours and crossed several other major rivers to kayak the Hurunui. I have made many trips since then both with experienced kayakers and beginners wanting to challenge themselves. The range of river features and the option for less confident paddlers to take out of the river before the Grade 3 sections makes the river perfect for trips with kayakers of mixed abilities.
14. The various options of trip length and difficulty make the Hurunui perfect for club kayak trips. The University of Canterbury Canoe Club uses the Hurunui considerably more than any other river. The club holds two introductory kayak courses a year, both of which finish with a trip down the Hurunui from Jollie Brook to the South Branch confluence. These courses introduce up to 80 people per year to the sport of kayaking. Club members also make many more private and club trips to the Hurunui,

often staying the night at the Jollie Brook camping site allowing for multiple kayak trips with minimal travelling. These trips would consistently exceed a conservative estimate of 10 trips per year.

15. Since my first descent of Maori Gully I have been down the section many dozens of times and have had a huge amount of enjoyment paddling on the river. During the months of September to November friends and I would often drive to the river after work to go paddling up to four nights a week to take advantage of the many river features that form at different flows, particularly the waves and holes that can be surfed. This ability to practise on moving water during the week played a huge part in my development as a kayaker.
16. At the opposite extreme to my first time down the Hurunui, one particular trip saw a group of us paddle the river at over 600 cumecs. The run took under 10 minutes and was a far more serious proposition than usual as swimming out of the kayak would have meant a certain loss of gear and possibly life.



Nick scouting the lines before a very high water run down Maori Gully

17. On this occasion the Hurunui was the only river within three hours of Christchurch that could reasonably be paddled as flooding from heavy North West rain in the mountains meant roads were closed resulting in no access to other rivers in the area.
18. By contrast at times of very low rainfall and very low river flows the Hurunui is one of very few rivers that remains navigable. Other major rivers that remain viable options for a trip are of lower or higher difficulty than the Hurunui and are less accessible.

Kayaking on the Hurunui River

19. The Hurunui is the closest river to Christchurch that offers consistent Grade 2 and Grade 3 white water. The Hurunui is under 1.5 hours drive from Christchurch. The Ashley is the only other river offering kayak trips of this difficulty within 1.5 hours drive of Christchurch but the flood level flows of >15 cumecs required to kayak the Ashley

occur only a small number of days per year. These days are determined by weather patterns and will often occur on week days when the majority of kayakers are unable to make use of the river. The Ashley River takes a minimum of 3 hours to kayak. This is much longer than the Hurunui River which can take as little as 30 minutes. The Ashley has no options for getting out midway along the river. This reduces the possibility of 'after work' kayaking on the Ashley River.

20. The Hurunui River is navigable at very low summer flows through to most flood flows. This allows paddling all year around and gives the option of after work kayak trips during daylight saving. This consistency of flows allows paddlers such as myself to paddle regularly thereby improving skills and maintaining kayak specific fitness.
21. Excluding high and extremely high flows (>200 cumecs) the Hurunui River always offers Grade 2 and Grade 3 white water. Flows above 200 cumecs may make the river more difficult and dangerous (Grade 4) but flows in this range are rare and do not usually persist for more than two days at a time. High flows also give intermediate and advanced kayakers the option of a challenging river trip.
22. As flows increase a section of the river may become more difficult. The many sections of river available for kayaking mean that kayakers of any ability can find a suitable section of river to descend at most flows.
23. The many sections of river available for kayaking on the Hurunui are a result of the excellent accessibility the river valley offers. The road follows very near the river from the bottom of Maori Gully to the Sisters Stream swing bridge. There are well defined access points at regular intervals throughout this stretch of river. The proximity of the river to the road allows easy exit in the case of an emergency or if a kayaker pushing the top end of their skill level finds themselves out of their depth.
24. The rivers close proximity to the road allows easy transporting of vehicles from the put in location to the take out location. The shuttle may easily be run or cycled meaning trips with one vehicle are viable. This is not the case on other local rivers where the car shuttles are often much longer than the river trip necessitating two or more vehicles.
25. Different flows change the river features markedly. This means a kayaker can paddle the same section of river repeatedly and have a different experience on each occasion. Even small changes in river flow mean some river features will disappear and others will form making for a unique, exciting and unpredictable trip every time.
26. The variety of river features on the Hurunui make the river interesting for kayakers of all abilities. The many eddies on all sections of the river are perfect for teaching and practicing eddy turns and ferry glides. The more difficult sections have faster current and allow more advanced kayakers to practice the same skills on more challenging white water but still in a relatively safe environment.
27. The relatively short length of many sections of the river means several sections may be kayaked in a day. These sections are of different difficulties. Having easier and harder sections is ideal from an instructional perspective as less able beginners can take out of the river at a given point while stronger kayakers can continue downstream into a harder section. This allows far more interesting trips for groups of mixed abilities.
28. Other rivers in the area that are suitable for beginner trips such as the Waiau River Gorge and Lower Rangitata are not suited to multiple sections being paddled as the

sections are longer, the access is not as good as the Hurunui, and the other river sections are of less difficulty and do not have the variety of difficulty or features that the Hurunui River offers.

29. For a non profit organisation such as the University of Canterbury Canoe Club, where the instructors do not get paid, the option of a more challenging instructor only section of river down Maori Gully at the end of a day, for example, makes it easier to get instructors to volunteer their time.

Fishing on the Hurunui River

30. The Hurunui provides excellent fishing in a wilderness, mountainous setting within close proximity to Christchurch. Many other rivers close to Christchurch contain trout and salmon but the Hurunui is the closest major river with a true wilderness feel.
31. The Hurunui provides fishing for trout and salmon in a wilderness setting but can sustain significant angling pressure. On many other wilderness rivers in New Zealand, if another angler is on the river before you then your chance of success is very low. The numerous access points and high fish density in the Hurunui means good fishing can be had despite significant angling pressure.
32. A range of waterways exist up the Hurunui River valley making the area a popular destination for multi day trips. Each of these waterways has a different character and makes for a different experience. The South Branch of the Hurunui is a mid sized freestone stream offering superb sight fishing to large trout whereas the Hurunui has much higher fish densities making it more suited to spin fisherman and fly fishing in poor weather conditions. The nearby lakes including Lake Taylor, Lake Sheppard, Lake Sumner and Lake Mason also have exceptional fishing adding to the area as a destination for fishing.

Conclusion

33. The Hurunui is unique as a kayaking river. This is due to its proximity to a major residential area, accessibility to the river, range of paddlable flows, consistency of paddlable flows and choice of river stretches of varying difficulty.
34. The Hurunui is an outstanding catchment for trout and salmon fishing. This is due to its proximity to a major residential area, accessibility to the river, proximity to other waterways of different character and ability to sustain high angling pressure.
35. The University of Canterbury Canoe Club and I request that the proposed Water Conservation Order be granted on the Hurunui so that many people in the future may enjoy this outstanding recreational resource.

Jonathon Hay
Club President
University of Canterbury Canoe Club

30 March 2009