

The following is my submission in support of the proposed water conservation order for the Hurunui River:

Form 30

Submission on publicly notified application for water conservation order or for revocation or amendment of water conservation order

Sections 205 and 216, Resource Management Act 1991

To: Special Tribunal - Hurunui River Water Conservation Order
c/- Alex Miller
Ministry for the Environment
PO Box 10362
Wellington 6143

Name of submitter: Victor Bolton NOVIS

This is a submission on an application from the *New Zealand and North Canterbury Fish and Game Councils and the New Zealand Recreational Canoeing Association* for a water conservation order for *Hurunui River*.

The application for the order arises from a concern to preserve especially the upper part of the Hurunui River in its unspoiled state, and it is this part in particular to which my submission relates.

My submission is:

The proposed Order has my strong and unqualified support. It do not have any scientific qualifications which lead me to this support, but over a period of almost sixty years I have frequently visited the Upper Hurunui and the Lake Sumner valley and have enjoyed and benefitted from the opportunities it offers in its unspoiled state.

The Upper Hurunui River has been identified as one of the district's significant natural assets, affording outstanding recreational opportunities that are enjoyed not only regionally but on a national basis. It is a truly beautiful river, wild and scenic, its runs and rugged gorges set among world-class mountain scenery.

Some years ago the major rivers of New Zealand were surveyed and classified according to their Wild and Scenic values. The upper parts of the Hurunui received high marks in this extensive study. This is a matter of public record.

In many parts the road runs immediately alongside the river, providing easy public access for those who wish to take advantage of the varied recreational opportunities offered. Hunters, fishermen, canoeists and kayakers, mountain bikers and drivers of 4 wheel drive vehicles, campers and trampers, and others who enjoy more passive recreation take advantage of this, and from my personal observations more and more people are enjoying the river and its surroundings every year. The health benefits they receive cannot be quantified but are important and should not be discounted.

As long ago as 1936 there was an attempt by an organisation called The Lake Sumner Beautifying Association to modify the Lake Sumner area, and ever since then there have been various threats to the river. A few years ago I was involved in opposition to plans by the North Canterbury Electric Power Board to dam the North Branch immediately upstream from its confluence with the South Branch. For a long time the scars left by the Board's bulldozers could be plainly seen from the road. Thankfully the proposal did not proceed, but if it had many of the most beautiful parts of the river would have vanished for ever.

The present application for a water conservation order seems a logical and necessary defence against all such attempts to modify the river. Damage could occur well beyond that part of the river to be physically altered by any proposed works, and could extend to both downstream lengths and perhaps to Lake Sumner itself. There has recently been and probably still is a proposal to build a dam across the river where it leaves the lake, inevitably raising the level of the lake itself. Is there a more beautiful lake in New Zealand than Lake Sumner? New Zealand is fortunate to have such a lake as this. It would be environmental folly to risk changing it forever for the sake of agricultural or similar gain.

The economic advantages that could result from some of the proposals affecting the Upper Hurunui are often argued in their support. There is no doubt that such advantages would occur, but they are outweighed by the value of the benefits which are available to so many people at the present time, and which result from the fact that the river remains in its natural state.

From my many years of observation of this river I believe that the proposed water conservation order should be fully implemented..

I seek the following decision from the special tribunal:

The tribunal should allow in its entirety the present application for the water conservation order.

I do not wish to be heard in support of my submission.

Date: December 8, 2008

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submitter:

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