

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
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Name of submitter: Polly Miller

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*.

My submission covers and supports all of the application, but in particular relates to:

- Paragraphs 39-42 of the application, which summarises the outstanding amenity and intrinsic value of the waters; and
- Paragraphs 96-115 of the application, which addresses the outstanding recreational attributes of the Hurunui River.

My submission is:

I started white water kayaking in 2007 while at University. The University of Canterbury Canoe Club (UCCC) organised beginner trips, my first day out in a boat was on the lower Hurunui River, near the state highway road bridge, with the river at 80 cumecs in a freezing cold southerly. Anything that is fun (even when you're cold, wet and scared) deserves another try, and once the river had dropped I joined another trip to the upper river, and was introduced to the delights of the Jollybrook and Dozy Stream sections. That summer we did do a bit of paid work, but mostly we went up to the Hurunui – my logbook says that we spent 28 days on the river between November and February. A friend taught me to Eskimo roll and I shall always regard the riffle where that momentous event took place very warmly.

While a great training ground with supervision, the Hurunui was also the site of our first whitewater epics. A paddling buddy and I headed up one day to do our first "independent" trip. With a solid six months paddling under our belts and new buoyancy aids we felt our new gear and ability to roll meant we could take on everything the river could throw at us. The Top Gorge at 90 cumecs was great fun and we thought we would try the mighty Maori Gully – the short class 3 gorge. It all went well till Jess found the largest hole (recirculating water feature) on the river and swam, and we discovered our rescue skills weren't equal to the situation. After chasing Jess's boat past the takeout, and reuniting with each other and all our gear

on a steep hillside kilometres from the car, we reflected on the lessons we'd learned; – that leading a trip is very different from following someone down the river and the limits of a two person team.

The following year the UCCC ran its annual Leaders and Seconds “teach to teach” course and I was back on the Hurunui, learning how to run club trips safely and pass on the skills of getting out on the water to new kayakers. There's nothing quite like putting yourself in another's wetsuit booties to remember that feeling of terror when teetering on an eddy line. Learning to instruct also means that I began to regard my favourite play spots with new eyes – looking twice at the undercut bluff on the river right and the tree creating a strainer downstream.

The Hurunui has a fantastic range of whitewater, from grade 2 to grade 3+, and is an outstanding place for Cantabrians to learn to paddle. Travelling overseas with my kayak, I paddled in many places in the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States, and few kayakers are as lucky as us. We go there because it's beautiful; the water is clean, I imagine the high country valley looks very much the same as it has for the last 100 years, and the only changes to the river are by natural flood events.

Living in Christchurch again after years elsewhere, I now paddle the Hurunui with the same people I first learned to ferry glide with over ten years ago. These days we own flash carbon fibre slalom boats and do carving turns on the Gully without getting our hair wet. It is always a great day out with lots of whitewater interest, and we're still finding new lines to link moves on the river. From looking at my logbook, I estimate that I have spent over 100 days on the Hurunui in the past 11 years.

With the increasing pressure on our water resources in Canterbury for irrigation and hydro power, I have been horrified by the idea that one of our most accessible magic places could be lost to future generations of recreational kayakers forever. I believe that the Hurunui is one of our most precious whitewater resources, and I give my whole hearted support to the proposal to preserve the Hurunui through a Water Conservation Order.

I seek the following decision from the special tribunal:

To support the kayaking sections of the Hurunui, from the Top Gorge, to the Hawarden Gap, to be protected in their current state, for future generations of whitewater kayakers to enjoy.

I nominate the NZRCA to present in support of my submission.

Yours sincerely

Polly Miller

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