

## UPDATE ON THE STATE OF THE LAKE TAUPO FISHERY

### SUMMARY OF TALK AT EASTER ANNUAL MEETING BY GLENN MACLEAN.

#### TOPIC: FISHERY RESEARCH AND LAKE TAUPO

In a PowerPoint presentation, Glenn outlined the research programmes currently underway and the reasons for them. The power point presentation is on our website [www.tongariroriver.org.nz](http://www.tongariroriver.org.nz) and is in Archives.

This is a summary of the 6 projects.

The topic was introduced with an explanation of the food cycle of the trout from phytoplankton – zooplankton – smelt – trout.

Underlying everything is the fact that smelt in Lake Taupo are limited by their food supply. The current problem of lack of smelt arose a couple of years ago when the lake failed to mix (turn over) further limiting food supply. Lake Taupo is a very healthy lake which limits the food supply.

Therefore research needs to:

1. Understand the dynamics of the smelt.
2. Monitor how the trout population is doing in the lake.
3. Research into stable isotopes to determine the history of individual fish (Can determine what food trout have been eating)

4. Collaboration with the Cawthron Institute on feeding efficiencies in the lake (Is taking the work of John Hayes from feeding issues in a river to feeding issues in the lake.)
5. A PhD study into the genetic makeup of the trout and whether these are changing (Influences on the change in the physical appearance of the trout and the changing life cycle)
6. Modelling the lake ecosystem using Ecopath and Ecosim models. (These are sophisticated research tools developed in the USA to show what is going on in the lake.)

In conclusion Glenn stated that they had concentrated on how nutrients flow, but they needed to better understand how nutrients flow through the system. They are addressing the smelt and trout components of the lake ecosystem. There is a better understanding of currents which determine the spatial variation in the lake. There is a need to understand the temporal and spatial distribution of phytoplankton which drives the whole system. There is little knowledge of zooplankton in Lake Taupo.

Glenn stated that the fishery was much improved on Easter of last year with more lake fish being well conditioned and with bright orange flesh but there are still poorly conditioned small fish. He thought it would take some years for the ripples to flow through and there is the issue of later spawning.

The implications are that license sales are down which has resulted in a reduced budget with which to manage the fishery.

**Below: Jared Goedhart with typical sized trout for '09**



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

**From the relative quiet of being the Advocates past president, I find myself closer to the action, as acting President, following Heather Macdonald's retirement for health reasons. I hope this sudden promotion is not a retrograde step! Graeme Nahkies has accepted the ensuing committee vacancy, and I can say that the AFTR is greatly strengthened by that move.**

The Committee has completed an extremely busy year, mainly in dealing with aspects of the Long Term Council-Community Plans of both the Taupo District Council and the Waikato Regional Council. Our principal concern is in the welfare of the Tongariro River. We strenuously argue for a river catchment management plan, and also for greater public recognition of the river as a taonga and as a recreational facility for all. Lately, committee members have been involved in the Lake Taupo Erosion Protection Strategy where our long-held view is that there would be many benefits from a small lowering of Lake Taupo's water level and/or a slightly different management regime (see Stuart Crosbie's full paper on this in the 2008 Annual Report. These are ideas now widely held in the community.

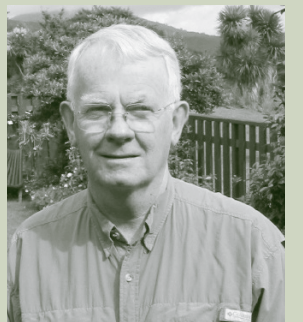
A major recreational development, extending the riverbank tracks, is in its early planning stages; following meetings with an enthusiastic Mayor Rick Cooper, the CEO and the Community Policy and Planning Manager of TDC, things are starting to look good for this Advocates' initiative. Committee member Ross Baker is looking after this project and he has written about it in this Newsletter.

An ongoing project for the Advocates is to find a way to bring together all of the science known about the Lake and the River. The last consolidation was published in 1983, and excellent as that book was (Lake Taupo: Ecology of a NZ Lake) an update would serve many purposes.

On the recovery of the fishery – we are not sure yet if there is much improvement this winter, but one of us (Eric Wilson) thinks that the fishery is improving. We hope there will be some further evidence to back this up!

Especially I thank John Toogood for managing the wilding pines project with DoC, Bob Appleton as our delegate on the Fishing Advisory Committee, Ross Baker and Robert Brace for access issues, Stuart Crosbie for Lake level, Ross Baker and Marja ter Haar for Didymo, Graeme for Tongariro River Management Forum, and also Richard Kemp who keeps a steady eye on our affairs.

Mark Cosgrove,  
President



## COMMITTEE CHANGES

We pay tribute to **Heather Macdonald** who since the annual meeting has resigned both as President and as a committee member for health reasons.

She was a great Public Relations person with a very easy manner which made people feel included and welcome. She was able to put matters of concern to the Advocates into the public arena with a clear and understandable approach.

We will miss her expertise and enthusiasm for our cause.

**Dr Mark Cosgrove** has taken the position

of Acting President until the next Annual Meeting.

At the annual meeting, **John Wheeler** stood down as a committee member. John had a wealth of experience as a surveyor in Taupo, an executive member of the Federated Mountain Clubs and as a member of the Geographic Board. His knowledge on access issues and workings of local government was



**John Wheeler**

particularly valuable to us.

**Marja ter Haar** comes to us with a background in school senior administration. We welcome Marja whom we have given joint responsibility for environmental matters.

**Graeme Nahkies** has been an advisor to the committee and has finally become a committee



**Marja ter Haar**

member. Graeme has a background in Government administration, was a CEO at Environment Waikato and is today a consultant. He is a committee member of the National Trout Centre.

To Heather and John, we say thank you. Your contributions were enormous. To Marja and Graeme, we warmly welcome you.



**Graeme Nahkies**



# RIVERBANK RESTORATION

**The Advocates continue with our vision that the Tongariro River corridor be returned as close as possible to its natural state so that the river valley’s landscape values and its biodiversity status are restored. So far our efforts include**

- Protection of existing indigenous flora; mature and juvenile kahikatea of noble status on private land at Kowhai Flat have been listed in the Taupo District Council’s outstanding and notable trees registry. As such these specimens form a distinctive attraction to tourists.
- Planting further specimens of indigenous species, especially kowhai, along the riverside walkway.
- Weeding amongst newly planted natives, involving AFTR members, residents and occasionally Corrections Department inmates.
- Eliminating wilding pines. This part of the restoration will achieve native plant germination and growth through better light conditions and through improved forest floor conditions etc as outlined above.

The last-mentioned program is at an advanced stage. Funded by EW, there has been extensive poisoning and some felling near tracks.

These pines are a special nuisance in areas where native forest regrowth is being encouraged here alongside the Tongariro River. Pines are visually intrusive, an important factor where aesthetic landscape values are to be restored. The pest trees also overpower emerging native plants as they win the competition for forest space. For the fauna they offer none of the advantages of native trees, no berries nor nectar, which encourage bird and insect life. Further, pine needles inhibit regeneration of native forest floor flora.

The effect of the poisoning is not subtle, there are many trees in the brown stage, in which the needles die and drop. Soon the skeletons will turn grey and later they will rot away.

Nationwide there are many campaigns aimed at curtailing these pest trees. A simple Google search will show the vigour of the overall crusade as New Zealanders restore their respect for native flora; there are over 300 pages of websites. All Regional Councils are taking action against wilding pines as part of New Zealand’s Biodiversity Strategy.

For a full description of the Advocates’ action, go to [www.tongariroriver.org.nz](http://www.tongariroriver.org.nz)



# DIDYMO

**The threat from Didymo remains the most significant threat to this fishery. We are pleased with the work being done by the Central North Island Didymo Regional Partner Group and their efforts to keep this area Didymo free.**

The group has representation from DoC Fishery, DoC Tongariro, DoC Waikato, Advocates For The Tongariro River, Fish and Game, Taupo District Council, Environment Waikato, Genesis, Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board and Biosecurity New Zealand.

This year they have enabled Dave Cade to be employed full time by DoC Fishery to promote the anti Didymo message to water users in the Taupo Fishery. They have pressed government for stronger anti Didymo messages at the ferry terminals.

It is great to see this group working together with the common goal of a Didymo free region.

Despite their efforts each of us as individuals has a responsibility to keep us Didymo free and to use the CHECK CLEAN DRY method.

# PUBLICITY FOR THE FISHERY

**A new DVD, *Angler’s Paradise – a history of the Taupo Fishery*, has been premiered in Turangi recently. The story-line covers the management of the fishery, Tuwharetoa involvement, and many anglers’ yarns. AFTR is pleased to have financially supported this DVD. The producer, John Ball, earlier made a DVD on the history of the Ruapehu ski fields.**



John Ball emailed to say “The idea for my documentary film on the history of the Taupo Fishery began in the living room of then President of the Advocates for the Tongariro River, Heather Macdonald. I had finished a documentary on the history of skiing on Ruapehu and was looking for a new project and especially one that would promote the area. Heather suggested the Taupo Fishery. That meeting took place two years ago. I was fortunate to receive a cash contribution of \$1000 towards the making of the film. The contribution was really appreciated. It was more than money - it was a huge act of faith in me. Could I produce a film that would do justice to the hundred plus year history of the fishery which is so important to our country’s heritage? You will be the judge of my efforts. I gratefully acknowledge your kind support.”

The DVD is available from [jbproductions@ihug.co.nz](mailto:jbproductions@ihug.co.nz)

# IN BRIEF

## LAKE LEVEL

Stuart Crosbie’s paper, published in the 2008 annual report, continues to attract attention from local authorities. The joint Environment Waikato - Taupo District Council committee, which has heard submissions on the Lake Taupo Erosion and Flood Strategy consultation document, was among those who requested a copy of Stuart’s paper.

## LABOUR WEEKEND SEMINAR

We continue promoting knowledge of the river with our seminar meeting at Labour Weekend, Sunday October 25th at 3.30pm

Our Guest speaker is Jarrod Bowler of Genesis Energy. We have invited Jarrod to speak on Genesis Energy’s role on the river.

## FROM THE SECRETARY TREASURER

Included with this newsletter is your receipt if your membership is current for the 2009 financial year. If not then a reminder slip has been included for you.

If you wish to pay through the internet then go to our website [www.tongariroriver.org.nz](http://www.tongariroriver.org.nz) for the form and bank account number. This site does not allow you to pay direct from the website. You have to make the payment through your own bank internet facility.

We thank you for your ongoing support.

# DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS

OF THE ADVOCATES FOR THE TONGARIRO

**Sylvia Smith and Bob MacDonnell as Distinguished Members of the Advocates for the Tongariro River.**

When the idea of forming a group called the Advocates was nothing more than a tiny thought it was Sylvia and Bob with their rousing speeches in response to EW proponents at a Project Watershed hearing in Turangi who helped to convince us that there would be sufficient fire power in the community to set up a group that could tweak the tail of the bureaucrat lion as it were.

Since then both Sylvia and Bob have contributed to the standing of this Society by both identifying with its purposes and by setting very high presentation standards in our annual reports and newsletters.

And don’t forget their part in our Didymo campaign; the posters are graphically strong and the radio slots were forceful.

Sylvia and Bob have concentrated our minds on the need to keep the AFTR brand clear and strong.

Here, plainly, the medium really is the message, as Marshall McLuhan told us it would be.

Our society would be quite a different outfit without its professionally prepared annual reports, and without its ‘stand out’ newsletters. Not only different but also the poorer.

It is particularly pleasing to have such people join us and stay with us; the street credibility of the Advocates is unquestionable, we are taken seriously.

Sylvia Smith and Robert MacDonnell have much to do with that standing.

# ACCESS

**The Advocates proposal to extend the Tongariro River tracks to link existing tracks on the upper river has been around for several years - since 2003. The proposal is to extend the existing Tongariro River track up the eastern bank (or true RHS) beyond Red Hut bridge to link with upper river tracks extending from Poutu Intake to Pillars of Hercules to Tree Trunk Gorge as Stage 1 of a vision to provide a four day loop track from Turangi.**

Following a meeting with the Taupo District Mayor and CEO in March 2009, at last this project has caught the imagination of Taupo District Council officials. i.e. The conceptual basis and longer term vision was mentioned several times by the Mayor - Rick Cooper - at the Turangi meeting on 15 June, as an example of Council cooperating with local groups towards a common mutually advantageous goal. The Council Planning Manager is currently in negotiations with key land owners.

The plan was introduced to the TTPA (Tongariro Turangi Promotion Association) on 8 June. At that meeting Sarah Gibb of DoC Board and the National History Society was very supportive of the proposal and thought we had taken the right track by enlisting the support of the District Council. At this meeting a Corrections Manager asked if they could have first option to work on the development of the track. So one of the biggest hurdles - the construction cost of 9 km of new tracks - may be overcome by their involvement.

The project is being discussed with Bike Taupo Advocacy Group (Inc), seeking their support and input for scoping the exercise re track design, etc.. They have been responsible for designing and funding construction of similar combined tramping/biking trails at Taupo - W2K track and Huka Falls - Craters of the Moon tracks.

At this stage we are delighted with the progress and the willingness of Council to commence negotiations with land owners. Watch this space...