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October 2007 Newsletter

Annula General Meeting

The AGM is done and dusted and the following people were duly elected:

President: **Paul Shanks**

Vice-President: **Mike Gunson**

Secretary/Treasurer: **Monique Davis**

Committee: **Allen Pidwell, Winston Pond, Grant McIntosh, Jonathan McCarthy, Peter Furze, David Storck and Peter Windsor.**

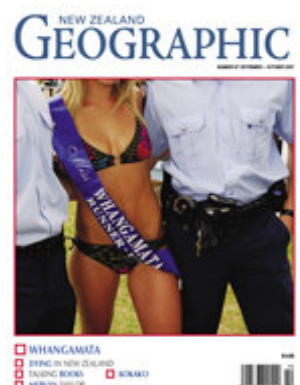
It was with some dismay however that barely a week after the AGM we received a letter from the Charities Commission to say that our application for charitable status is on hold because the Wind Up clause in our Consitution lacks the word 'charitable' in relation to eventual distribution of funds to like minded organisations. This means we now have to call *another* **General Meeting** to make an amendment to the Constitution. All very frustrating but it has to be done. To maximise efficiency we will combine this with an ordinary committee meeting, tentatively set for **28 October** in Auckland, but members will be notified.

Networking

Nothing beats meeting with likeminded seaweeds and academics for inspiration and exchange of ideas! Paul Shanks, Monique Davis and Brad Scarfe met up with **Neil Lazarow** from Griffith University, Australia, at the **Coastal and Marine Tourism Congress** at AUT University in Auckland on 20 September, where Neil presented a paper on the socio-economic impact / value of recreational surfing. This month we are sending Paul across the ditch to represent Surfbreak Protection at the **Waves of Change Annual Surfrider Foundation Conference** in Narrabeen 19-21 October. The programme looks very interesting with many prominent speakers, including Prof. Andy Short from NZ on the topic of Surfing Reserves. Meanwhile Brad is only days away from completing his Phd on Sustainable Management of Surfing Breaks (Waikato University). Further good news is that Surfbreak Protection is now a member of **ECO** (Environment and Conservation Organisations of NZ).

Media

It is great to see the message is getting out there with lots of media coverage. The recent feature in the **NZ Geographic** on Whangamata provided an interesting perspective on a coastal community in turmoil. Then there was the article on Surf Highway 45 in the **Taranaki Daily Times**. In the pipeline is a 10 minute interview with Paul Shanks on **BFM** and an article by William Henry from Save the Waves in the upcoming issue of **Surfers Path** magazine.



Letter to Prime Minister competition

It is countdown for the letter to our PM competition, as entries close on Labour Weekend. Great prizes to be won, check our website www.surfbreak.org.nz for entry details. Winner will be announced following the committee meeting at the end of the month.



From the Regions

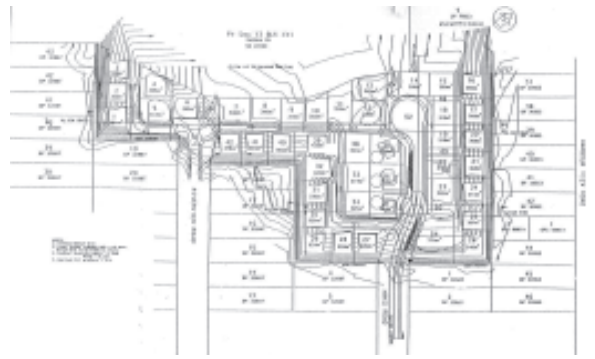
Whangamata Marina update

Surfbreak Protection Society (SPS) cannot give much of an update on the proposed marina., as we are not getting much information. It's looking like a closed process between the Waikato Regional Council, Thames Coromandel District Council (TCDC) and the Marina Societies Committee members. Members themselves also seem out of the loop. The local newspaper, as in the past, is not searching out the story.

For more respected journalistic accounts there is the latest edition of NZ Geographic. To come is a 10-minute radio programme on BfM as well as articles in an international surf journal and a book on wetlands.

As of writing no plan of the marina, its carpark, its mitigation site, its 1km rock lined canal, the TCDC's extra high density housing sub division or the weir (a low tide artificial waterfall) have been made available. Without these plans and an understanding of the quantities involved, there is no starting point to scrutinise all their other plans.

One of these other plans, The Construction Management Plan is of concern. It is written by the same Tonkin & Taylor engineer who produced a report for the Marina Society (MS) saying the Mundaka report had no relevance to Whangamata Bar. His comparison was dismissed by coastal scientists, saying it was produced by an engineer, not a coastal geomorphologist with a sound understanding of coastal processes. The same engineer was also a Marina Society consultant to the High Court case. A Jack-of-all-trades.



The contracting techniques used by the MS are to “post out” consent conditions from the society to the engineers to the sub contractors. Sub contractors even choose what methods they will use. SPS insist that the responsibility path of consent conditions be tagged to Marina Society members and the Councils. This is their baby, their experiment. The two Councils have spent over 12 million of ratepayers funds on sponsoring this marina.

Waikato Regional Council (WRC) has two surfbreaks with an international reputation, Raglan and Whangamata, plus many other breaks they are meant to look after. They spend nothing on gaining an understanding about them, let alone considering protection of them.

The Sandbar condition put in the consent by the former Minister for the Environment Benson Pope is a worry. Measuring the bar does not qualify it. Our expectation is that the MS and WRC will explain to us why Whangamata has an international surfbreak. If they understand what manufactures the wave quality, they can then monitor those causes.

On TradeMe berths for the proposed marina are up for sale at \$249,000 and another for \$175,000. Once Public foreshore for everyone, now a tradable commodity for the well connected.

A group of Whangamata boat ramp users started up earlier this year. Mainly older guys, who use the boat ramp and fear that the Marina Society and the councils have not thought about the impact on the use of the boat ramp and its parking facilities, one of the most used utilities of the town. A worry tha has arisen is that the Councils and the Marina Society have made a secret deal to get rid of the ramp and force all users to go through a private ramp in the proposed marina. Existing navigation and safety bylaws would probably not allow the ramp to stay if the rock-lined canal goes ahead.

There has been another twist with the diesel fuel facility about to be removed from the Whangamata wharf. The reason for its removal is not enough fuel sold to justify keeping it there. How the Regional Council, which has an office 10 meters from the tank, and the marina society never saw this coming is curious. The Landscape Plan for the proposed marina, stamped by the Environment Court, has no fuel facility. The Marina Society are also proposing another vehicle entrance which goes outside their Roading Consent. To top it off, members of the Marina Society have disturbed the saltmarsh mitigation site outside the process outlined to the Environment Court.

Taranaki Roundup

Port Taranaki Breakwater Extension.

Representatives of Surf Break protection, Surfing Taranaki and the new Plymouth Surf Rider's Club met with representatives from Port Taranaki and Gasbridge, the consortium planning to import LNG into Port Taranaki, which requires the addition of two wing-walls on the end of the main breakwater. The aim of the meeting was to update all parties on the initial results of the oceanographic studies of the effects the breakwater will have on Belt Road surf break.

The following is the agreed statement issued by the parties:

On Tuesday 18th Oct Pid, Craig and Arch met with representatives from Gasbridge and Port Taranaki to view the draft findings into the effects any extension of the main breakwater would have on the Belt Road break. Although we are currently formulating a series of questions to put to Gasbridge, first simulations show that the surf break is complex and the effects of port modifications are relatively subtle. Surf quality depends on many factors (such as wave height, peel angle, wave behaviour along the ride, etc). The analysis shows that the port modifications produce varying effects on these factors, and the effects vary with different conditions (wave period, tide, swell direction). In general, results show a relatively small reduction in wave height at the break, and that the effects on the surf quality are more due to the dredging of the channel than to the sheltering caused by the new tips on the breakwater.

We have another meeting in a few weeks to view the final report after which we can schedule a club meeting to be addressed by Gasbridge.

Arawatha, a popular spot for surfing competitions

Coastal Close Out

Following the monthly meeting of Surfing Taranaki at which the Opunake representatives expressed deep concern at the non-notified new road and car-park at Arawhata and the fencing off access to the cliff for competitions, Pid and Arch were authorised to approach the Taranaki regional Council, South Taranaki DC and new Plymouth DC to sound out their response to the loss of coastal access.

We found:

- 1) that although construction on the coastal paper road is not allowed this has been ignored particularly in South Taranaki.
- 2) that at subdivision such as Punihos the 20 metre esplanade strip required by the South Taranaki DC was surveyed from the cliff top out to sea [read from high tide mark seawards] and accepted by the Council.
- 3) that at **Arawhata** the legally declared but unformed section of Arawhata Road which gives access to the DOC owned esplanade strip along the cliff top has been securely fenced off by the developers, and the CEO of South Taranaki DC in his own words "Could not help us"!



Consequently we went public and received a half-page magazine style report in the Taranaki daily news. This generated a whole raft of telephone calls to Pid and Arch - about equal in support and disgust.. The one bright spot was the contact from the new owner at Rocky Rights who is a tetraplegic. Phillip is very supportive of surfing and welcomes competitions being held there and with prior advice will allow access for competition resources.

The fight is also being carried by the Kaupokonui Beach Society which was formed in 1945 protesting at the STDC granting a 30-year lease for a quarry adjacent to the beach and Stream. Now Kaupokonui is not an iconic surf beach but is a sandy family friendly place where families and young persons can begin their life-long involvement with the ocean and learn to surf on one of Taranaki's few sandy beaches.

SPS along with Surfing Taranaki has supplied evidence to the lawyer representing the Beach Society which will be presented at the environment court hearing in a few months. This was a valuable exercise for SPS as we learned that although we were not part of the original submitters we can provide evidence for the court through an original submitter.

Allen

Te Arai

Surfbreak Protection has put in a submission in opposition to the proposed development at Te Arai. Here is an update on proceedings from the Te Arai Beach Preservation Society:

There have been over 1600 submissions processed with perhaps 1700 in total. Around 98% are against the plan change. These will be collated and publicly notified and the council will ask for “further submissions” regarding the submissions made – so people can submit for or against the first round submissions. Further submissions are likely to open in 3-4 weeks. After they have closed they will all be collated and the council will set the hearing date(s).

Mark Walker www.tearai.org



Raglan

In a meeting on the 21st September the Waikato District Council has delegated the authority of the management of all events at the Manu Bay Recreation Reserve to the Manu Bay Management Committee. This committee consists of representatives of Point Boardriders Club, Whale Bay R&R Assn. and Raglan Sport Fishing Club. Council also adopted a revised set of rules for events at Manu Bay. There now will be no more than 3 major surfing events per year, at least 8 weeks apart, and no more than 3 fishing contests per year. They can not be held concurrently. Minor surfing competitions can be held at 4 weeks interval. The rules are to lessen environmental impact on the Manu Bay reserve and to ensure fair and equitable access for all surfers and other users of the surfbreak. The sale of alcohol on the reserve is also prohibited. The full policy can be found on the Waikato Council website at www.waikatodc.govt.nz



Mundaka

On the 5th October the world premiere of *Mundaka*, screened at the 2007 Billabong Pro in Mundaka. The documentary film relates the unique story of the thousand year old Basque fishing village and the changes brought about by the introduction of surfing in the early 1970's and how the town people cope with the transformation of a slow-paced village into a bustling destination for surfers, spectators, media, and travelers. The 46 minute-long documentary encompasses all aspects of the evolution of the town with unique testimonies from the local people (ranging from the fishermen, local surfers, restaurant and bar owners, and the younger generation), as well as “visitors”, in the likes of pro surfers, tourists, occasional surfers, etc.

The Mundaka documentary will be presented in festivals across the world throughout 2008 and could be a valuable contribution to the Economic Value of surfbreaks debate.

Reminder: If you haven't done so already, please support Surfbreak Protection by renewing your membership.

Wishing you all fabulous waves for the start of summer!

The Surfbreak Protection Committee