
FOREWORD – ROTORUA LAKES SYMPOSIUM 2017

TROUBLE MAKERS

Catfish, Lakeweeds and Nutrients – Complex Lake Systems Restoration

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This was the Society's 10th Symposium and was held at the Millennium Hotel, Rotorua on the 31st August and 1st September. It built on our 2015 Lake Weed and Wallabies Symposium and themed around eradication of catfish, the spread and now dominance of lake weeds and the requirement to control browsing animal pests causing erosion.

The confirmation of the arrival of the bullhead catfish in Lake Rotoiti has rightfully been reviewed with trepidation. Lindsay Chadderton from the Nature Conservancy, Great Lakes Project gave us valuable insight into pest fish spread and their Mississippi/Great Lakes projects. This complemented our speakers on controls and eradication. The eradication of catfish, at this stage of the incursion, will be a first and its difficulty should not be underestimated.

NIWA lead the Lake Weed Menace and Strategies session. The confirmation that in most of our lakes invasive aquatic weeds now occupy approximately 90% of the flora is validation that without lake wide intervention we will lose our lakes to weeds. The speakers were able to outline control strategies on a lake wide basis, provide broad costings and give us hope that the lakes can be restored to pre-1960's native flora levels. The challenge is with us all.

The pre-dinner Mayoral Forum gave a wide-ranging discussion on sustainability.

The second day was based on the Eight Lakes of Tarawera, their current state, understanding of the ground water flows, present limitations to scientific knowledge and challenges in completing modelling of the complex. Focus was then shifted to control of pest animals, 1080 use and an insightful view of the public reaction by author Dave Hansford. Progress made and challenges remaining to the rural sector were discussed. The final section laid out the opportunities and costs associated with restoration. The importance of the lakes and tourism to our district economy was presented by Hannah Mueller. Jan Hania from the NEXT Foundation outlined opportunities and challenges in funding.

Thanks go to the session chairs for the excellent conduct of the programme – Todd McClay, Minister of Trade; John Gifford, LWQS; Bill Cleghorn, Bay Trust and Warren Webber, LWQS.

I acknowledge and thank our sponsors for their continuing support of our symposia. Without that financial assistance we would be unable to bring together the contributors, our thanks go to Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Rotorua Lakes Council, Bay Trust and the Rotorua Energy Charitable Trust.

Finally, I would like to recognise the work and assistance from my committee and more particularly Warren Webber, Ian McLean, John Gifford, Stewart Edward and Libby Fletcher and Ann Green for her role as editor of these Proceedings.

We look forward to all readers having a fuller understanding of the challenges and solutions in our quest to restore our lakes. It takes a village to raise a child and a community to save a lake.

Don Atkinson
Chairman LWQS