

Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy



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An Environment Bay of Plenty, Rotorua District Council and Te Arawa Maori Trust Board joint project

Executive Summary

The Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy (the Strategy) aims to ensure that a diverse range of recreational opportunities are available to the community, while recognising and providing for the physical, biological, social and cultural characteristics of the lakes. It aims to clarify the policy context within which management decisions relating to recreation on the Rotorua lakes are made. As such, it is not intended to dictate the daily activities of agency staff working 'on the ground'. Rather, the Strategy will provide a sound basis on which such management decisions can be made. It also provides for more effective communication and coordination between the various agencies that have an interest and responsibility for managing recreation on the lakes of the Rotorua District.

The Rotorua Lakes provide opportunities for a wide range of recreational activities, including boating, fishing and angling, swimming, kayaking, and more active sports such as water-skiing, jet-skiing and power boating. A number of commercial operators also use the lakes, providing charter boat hire and cruises. Informal users comprise the majority of users: visitors and day-trippers travelling locally, regionally and nationally to spend their leisure time at the lakes.

This Strategy is a guide to recreational management in two ways. The first is through the application of the Recreational Opportunities Spectrum to categorise lake areas by the recreational opportunities and management policies that are appropriate to different locations. The four categories are: Port, Front Country Accessible, Back Country Accessible, and Remote. This aligns management approaches with recreational uses and lake characteristics specific to each zone.

The second is a summary of three specific lake management issues, and five management actions to address these, as identified by the Technical Working Group. These are listed in Table 1 below.

Management Issue	Management Actions
1. Public Access to the Rotorua Lakes	1. Complete a Rotorua Lakes Access Inventory 1A. Monitoring Motorised Craft on the Lakes
2. Sign Communication, Education and Interpretation	2. Development of Coordinated Sign Panels
	3. The Recreation Map (Appendix 1)
	4. Provision of Interpretative Material by Te Arawa 5. Public Communication and Awareness
3. Working together	6. Establishment of a Rotorua Lakes Recreation Forum



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Chapter 1: Aims and Principles of the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The *Strategy for the Lakes of the Rotorua District* is the over-arching strategic document that sets out the vision, goals and actions for co-ordinated, holistic lake management. Representatives from Environment Bay of Plenty, Rotorua District Council and Te Arawa Trust Board form the Rotorua Lakes Strategy Joint Committee, which oversees the implementation of the *Lakes Strategy* and its resulting action plans, strategies and management policy.
- 1.1.2 Objective 5 of the *Lakes Strategy* identifies the need to develop a Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy. Lake water quality has rightly been the *Lakes Strategy's* key lake management issue, addressed through Action Plans specific to each lake. However the *Lakes Strategy* recognises that there are many other aspects to the lakes and their use by the public, including the recreational opportunities that they offer.
- 1.1.3 1.1.2 The development of the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy (the Strategy) has provided an opportunity to consider the high-level planning and policy context of recreation in the Lakes. It has brought together a range of agencies, each with their own responsibilities in relation to recreational management, to discuss the many complex and overlapping issues; to identify current and potential points of conflict and how these might be resolved; and to consider how we can work together more effectively in the future. The overall aim of the Strategy is to provide for a diverse and exciting range of recreational opportunities, while protecting the unique characteristics that make the Rotorua Lakes such a special place.

1.2 A Vision for the Recreational Management of the Rotorua Lakes

Management agencies, lake owners and the community agree to a shared aim to protect the environmental and cultural values that make each lake special, while ensuring that a diverse range of recreational opportunities are available to lake users.



1.3 Aims

1.3.1 As mentioned above, Objective 5 of the *Lakes Strategy* has an enjoyment goal as follows:

“The public can obtain the greatest possible pleasure from the lakes in the Rotorua district”.

The *Lakes Strategy* details three tasks to achieve this goal. They are:

- Task 10: “Establish a single working group on recreational use ... with a brief to monitor and recommend recreation guidelines ...”
- Task 11: “Prepare and present an annual report on the Harbourmaster’s activities ...”
- Task 12: “Prepare a schedule of areas required for the protection of public access.”

1.3.2 Broadly, the Strategy aims to provide the policy context within which the recreational management of the Rotorua Lakes takes place. It is a policy document to guide the actions of operational staff working ‘on-the-ground’. It identifies the context within which lake management agencies make decisions about services and facilities for Rotorua Lakes’ recreation: that context being the diversity of existing recreational use, and the iconic water/landscapes of the Rotorua Lakes.

1.3.3 The Strategy will:

- (a) Establish a shared vision and framework that promotes a consistent approach to Rotorua Lakes recreation management.
- (b) Identify specific management issues and actions to improve lake recreation management.
- (c) Establish the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Forum: composition, scope, reporting and meeting frequency.
- (d) Deliver a map and associated resources to help management agencies, recreational users and other interested parties easily access lake recreation information.

1.4 Strategy Principles

Principle 1: Management agencies will seek to recognise and protect the existing environmental and physical characters of individual lakes and parts of lakes.

Explanation: Individual lakes have specific characters that relate to the surrounding environmental and cultural characteristics. Management should identify which activities are appropriate in the context of individual lakes, and to provide for those requirements accordingly.



Principle 2 A diverse range of recreational opportunities and types will be promoted.

Explanation: At present a wide range of recreational opportunities are available throughout the Rotorua lakes. The aim is to maintain this diversity and choice. Management should respond to new forms of recreation as they arise.

Principle 3 The Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy will provide a policy context that will guide management decisions relating to the recreational management of the Rotorua Lakes.

Explanation: The Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy is not intended to dictate the actions of operational managers working 'on the ground'. Rather it will provide the background policy and vision to guide decisions made regarding recreational management, and to establish a common framework between the various agencies involved.

1.5 Technical Working Group and Recreational Users Group

The development of this strategy was overseen by a Technical Working Group that includes representatives of all the key agencies involved in the management of recreation on the Rotorua lakes. These are: Te Arawa Maori Trust Board, Environment Bay of Plenty, Rotorua District Council, Department of Conservation and Fish & Game (Eastern Region). In addition, an informal Recreational Users Group was set up. This group provided some initial feedback on the development of the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy. Interests represented in this group included: sailing / yachting, kayaking, rowing, and youth skills training.



Chapter 2: Strategic Overview

2.1 Rotorua Lakes Protection and Restoration Action Programme

2.1.1 As indicated in Chapter 1, the *Lakes Strategy* described the development of this Strategy. Since the *Lakes Strategy* was published, a lot of work towards its other objectives, such as actions to improve lake water quality, has been undertaken. It is important to clarify the links between this work and the development of the draft Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy.

2.1.2 Work carried out under the auspices of the Rotorua Lakes Joint Strategy Committee through the Rotorua Lakes Protection and Restoration Action Programme includes:

- Construction and restoration of wetlands.
- Diversions: Ohau Channel diversion, Tikitere geothermal, Hamurana diversion investigation.
- Groundwater assessments
- Action plans to protect or improve the water quality of twelve Rotorua Lakes.
- Communication plans.
- Nutrient modelling and nutrient assessments.
- Rotorua Lakes Aquatic Pest Operational Strategy.
- The Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy.

This Strategy acknowledges that the issues of lakes water quality, weed infestation, and recreation on the Rotorua lakes influence each other. While recreational activities themselves have little impact on lake water quality (compared to other factors like nutrient enrichment from the catchments), lake water quality definitely affects recreational activities. In recent years, for example, closures of Lake Rotoiti due to toxic cyanobacterial blooms have caused many recreational users to shift to other lakes, such as Lake Tarawera.

Individual lake action plans to protect or improve lake water quality also have a close relationship with the Strategy.



A positive recreational experience – which the Strategy aims to provide – will require that lake quality be of a sufficient standard. Conversely, the Strategy should aim to ensure that any recreational activities taking place do not inadvertently cause a reduction in lake quality, through introduction of aquatic weeds, pest fish or nuisance algae.

2.2 Management Agencies

2.2.1 There are a number of agencies that have a statutory or other responsibility for management of Rotorua Lakes recreation. These are: the Rotorua Lakes Strategy Joint Committee, Environment Bay of Plenty, Rotorua District Council, Land Information New Zealand, Te Arawa Maori Trust Board, the Department of Conservation, and Fish & Game New Zealand. The following details the responsibilities of these agencies.

2.2.2 **Te Arawa Maori Trust Board** represents the local iwi in the Rotorua Lakes area. A key component of the Lakes Strategy is the need to recognise and provide for the traditional relationship of Te Arawa with their ancestral lakes. The lakes are very significant to the Te Arawa people. Historically, the lakes were a source of food and a means of transport, extremely important in the pre-European economy.

Today, the lakes are a source of pride and cultural identity. They have recently been the subject of Treaty of Waitangi grievance and settlement. A deed of settlement has been drawn up with the Crown, yet to pass into law, which would (among other things) transfer the Crown-owned lakebeds to a Te Arawa governance body. Should this occur, public recreation and use of current structures would continue as before. However any new structures or new activities using the lakebed would require an agreement with Te Arawa as lakebed owners.

2.2.3 **Environment Bay of Plenty** (the Bay of Plenty Regional Council) has the primary responsibility for lakes water quality under section 30 of the Resource Management Act 1991. Environment Bay of Plenty is also responsible (under legislation) for aquatic weed and pest fish spread, lake/lakebed use consents (including structure authorisation) and discharge consents, and navigation/safety, including enforcing the Navigation and Safety Bylaw 2004 (see 2.2.6). The structure authorisation and Navigation and Safety Bylaw responsibility has recently returned to Environment Bay of Plenty from Rotorua District Council's delegated authority.

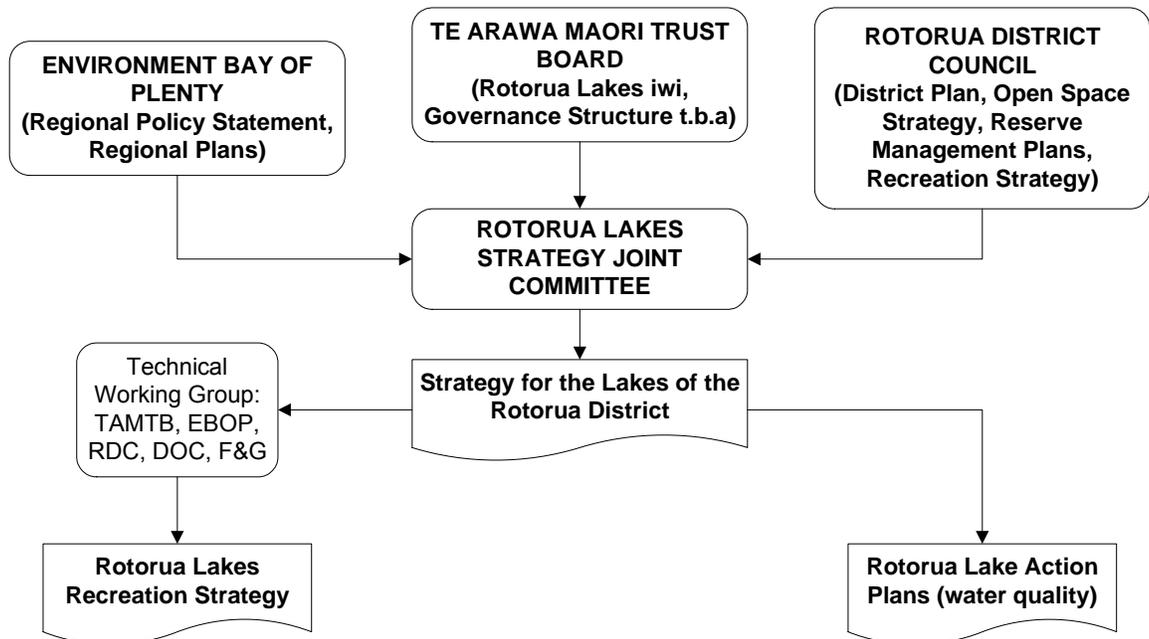
2.2.4 **Rotorua District Council** has responsibility for:

- Noise control (delegated from Environment Bay of Plenty).
- Responsibility for recreation reserve management for the benefit and enjoyment of the public under the Reserves Act (1977). This includes the provision and maintenance of access points (boat ramps, jetties) and associated facilities (public toilets, car parking).
- Ownership of Lake Okaro and its surrounding reserve.



2.2.5 The **Rotorua Lakes Strategy Joint Committee** is a joint committee under Schedule 7, clause 30 of the Local Government Act 2002. The Committee is made up of representatives from Environment Bay of Plenty, Rotorua District Council and Te Arawa Maori Trust Board. It oversees the management of the Rotorua Lakes and the implementation of the Strategy for the Lakes of the Rotorua District (the Lakes Strategy). Should Te Arawa's Lakes Deed of Settlement with the Crown be passed into law, the Committee would become codified as the Rotorua Lakes Strategy Group in the settlement legislation.

The following diagram sets out the relationship of the Strategy with the Rotorua Lakes Strategy Joint Committee.



2.2.6 The **Harbourmaster's** roles and responsibilities are: (to be added)

To discuss the placement and location of buoys, ski access lanes, swimming areas, five knot zones and other designated areas with the local community prior to any creation or change. The existing arrangement of these areas will be reviewed with local communities in due course.

To enforce the Navigation and Safety Bylaw 2004 on the Rotorua Lakes.

The Harbourmaster's decisions about navigation and safety should take into account the content of the Strategy and the needs of the local lakeside community.

2.2.7 The **Department of Conservation** have a responsibility under the Conservation Act (1987) to foster recreation, as long as it is not inconsistent with the conservation of natural or historic resources. A stated aim is to promote appropriate recreation and increased public enjoyment of protected places, through the provision of appropriate facilities (e.g. walkways, campsites) and education/interpretation. The Department of Conservation also owns Lake Okareka.



2.2.8 Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) is a government department that currently administers nine of the Rotorua Lakes' lakebeds on behalf of the Crown: Lakes Rotoma, Rotoehu, Rotoiti, Rotorua, Okataina, Tarawera, Tikitapu, Rerewhakaaitu and most of Rotomahana. As owner of the lakebeds, Land Information New Zealand is also responsible for control of lake weed attached to the lakebed when it becomes a nuisance issue.

In the future these lakebeds may be transferred to a Te Arawa governance structure. Should this occur, LINZ would still retain ownership of the lake water column and the air above it (the stratum) for thirteen Rotorua Lakes: Lakes Rotoma, Rotoehu, Rotoiti, Rotorua, Okataina, Tarawera, Tikitapu, Rerewhakaaitu, Rotomahana, Okareka, and Lakes Ngahewa, Ngapouri and Tutaeinga in the Waikato region (not covered by this Strategy). LINZ would consult with Te Arawa on resource consent applications for new recreational activity. If the activity affects the lakebed and the air/water stratum above, LINZ and Te Arawa will both make a decision about the activity. If the activity affects the stratum only then LINZ solely will make a decision about the activity.

2.2.9 Fish & Game New Zealand have a statutory responsibility under the Conservation Act (1987) to advocate for freshwater fishing and game bird hunting. This includes taking an interest in recreation, water quality issues, and lobbying for improved lake access.

2.3 Existing Policy Framework

The Strategy is a broad policy document that sets the context within which management decisions affecting recreational use of the Rotorua lakes are made. It exists within a framework of other policy and planning documents, including the following:

2.3.1 Strategy for the Rotorua Lakes and individual lake action plans

The *Strategy for the Rotorua Lakes* is the Lakes overarching management strategy, as described in Chapter 1 and 2.1.

2.3.2 Rotorua Lakes Aquatic Pest Operational Strategy

The Rotorua Lakes Aquatic Pest Operational Strategy is being developed at the same time as this Strategy. There are a number of links between both strategies. The Aquatic Pest Strategy will contain a broad collection of policies and management projects to control the spread of pest plants, fish, algae and other species in the Rotorua Lakes. Some of these may impinge on the Strategy's goal of pleasure from the use of the lakes, and the enhancement of public access. For example, if a weed incursion is discovered in a lake, public access to that lake may be restricted while emergency actions are carried out to remove the weed. Or access to a lake may be restricted to limit further spread of invasive weeds.

These aquatic pest actions may restrict recreational use in the short to medium-term, but in the long-term will allow greater recreational opportunities than there would otherwise be. For example, if a new weed incursion is not removed from a lake, the weed may spread through the lake and around boat ramps forming dense weed mats, making it very difficult for kayaks, boats, and swimmers to travel through it. A large-



scale weed infestation in a lake can encourage people to recreate in other lakes with fewer weeds.

Also, the policies in this Strategy to enhance recreational pleasure from lake use must be tempered by the Aquatic Pest Strategy goals. For example, this Strategy will not encourage additional lake access points, as this increases the risk of aquatic weeds spreading among the lakes. Also the Strategy will promote use of information signs, and boat wash down areas and facilities to remove weed fragments from boats and trailers, for the same reason.

2.3.3 Regional Navigation and Safety Bylaws

As of July 2005, Environment Bay of Plenty will resume direct responsibility for upholding the Regional Navigation and Safety Bylaw. Under this Bylaw, the Harbourmaster has the ability to place navigational aids in the water, and to impose speed and craft restriction where necessary for safety reasons. This Strategy will complement the Harbourmaster's role through emphasising the need to educate users about the safe and appropriate use of the lakes.

2.3.4 Regional Policy Statement

The Regional Policy Statement is the Bay of Plenty region's highest planning document under the Resource Management Act 1991. It directs how other regional and district plans are developed and interpreted.

The Regional Policy Statement focuses on the "significant" resource management issues of the region. It does not address the issue of recreation on the Rotorua lakes, and therefore has few direct implications for the management of recreational activities.

2.3.5 Proposed Regional Water and Land Plan and Tarawera River Catchment Regional Plan

The Proposed Regional Water and Land Plan contains issues, objectives, policies, methods, and rules to address the sustainable management of land, water and geothermal resources within the scope of Environment Bay of Plenty's functions under the Resource Management Act 1991.

The Tarawera River Catchment Regional Plan is similar to the Water and Land Plan (and will eventually be merged with the Water and Land Plan) but only covers Lakes Okataina, Okareka, Tikitapu, Rotokakahi, Okaro, Rotomahana and Tarawera.

Content (including rules) in these two Plans relevant to the Strategy include discharges to waterways and lakes, structures in lake beds (e.g. jetties), environmental education, planting or removal of vegetation, dredging, and navigational markers.

2.3.6 Rotorua Long-Term Council Community Plan and Community Outcomes

The Rotorua Long-Term Council Community Plan includes these Community Outcomes relevant to the Strategy:

- 'A safe and caring community'.



- A community that respects its environment’.
- ‘A healthy community’.
- ‘A community with excellent facilities and services’.
- ‘A community that values its living Maori heritage’.

The Strategy is in line with all these community outcomes. Rotorua District Council is currently undertaking the preparation of four high-level policy statements relating to the four Community Wellbeing foci of Environment, Economy, Social and Cultural. It is envisaged that these documents will collectively provide a vision for Rotorua District, and will inform all strategies and plans produced by Rotorua District Council in the future, both statutory and non-statutory. This Strategy will sit beneath the 4 Statements, and its future implementation will be informed by each of them, particularly the Environment and the Social Statement.

2.3.7 Rotorua District Council’s Recreation Strategy, Reserves Management Plans and Open Space Strategy (Draft)

Rotorua District Council owns and manages a number of lakeside reserves, mainly for the purpose of informal recreational enjoyment. The Rotorua District Council Recreation Strategy emphasises the importance of these reserves as venues for recreation by local people. In 2002, 85% of Rotorua residents visited Rotorua District Council lakeside reserves. In practice, because some of the lakeside reserves are very popular destinations and access points, Parks and Recreation staff deal with many of the recreation issues on a day-to-day basis. In the same way, this Strategy will not dictate ‘on-the-ground’ actions, but will provide a policy context reserve managers’ decisions.

2.3.8 Rotorua District Council District Plan

The District Plan places some limits on activities taking place on the surface of the water. It contains policy for certain key locations within the scope of the Strategy. For example, Part 20 (Lakes A Zone) creates

“...a new plan for seven lake catchments around Lakes Tarawera and Okareka. It deals with the nationally significant environmental qualities of the area and gives weight in the plan to issues such as natural character, tangata whenua and heritage, lake water quality, and protection of native bush and wildlife. The variation provides for development to be managed taking these issues into account”.

The Strategy appears to be in line with the Lakes A Zone approach, in that it seeks to protect some of the important characteristics of the ‘remote’ locations, while allowing for an appropriate level of recreational use.

Resource Management Objectives include:

- The protection of the natural, cultural and amenity values of water bodies and their margins in the District.



- The use of the lakes and other water bodies and their margins in the District, where the use is compatible with the maintenance of natural, cultural and amenity values.
- Public access to lakes and rivers within the District.

Water A Zone created to allow for management of potential conflicts between different recreational use of surface water of the lakes. (Water B zone is special areas for protection – natural values).

Rules relating to recreational use include:

- Permitted activities: motorised water based recreational activities, including hovercraft; navigational aids etc.; use of motorised craft for aquatic weed management, and research and monitoring (not hovercraft and floatplanes), non-motorised water based recreational activities;
- Discretionary activities: moorings and ski lanes; jetties, boatsheds and structures for recreation purposes; wharves and marinas; private and public ramps and slipways.

Commercial Use tends to be controlled through managing the physical infrastructure of the commercial entity – location of offices / jetties etc. rather than the activity itself (especially if it fits as a permitted activity as outlined above).

2.4 Commitment of Statutory Agencies to Principles and Actions

The successful implementation of this Strategy will require commitment and 'buy-in' to the Strategy at the management and policy-setting level within each organisation. In addition, each agency will be expected to:

- 1 Identify key 'contact person(s)' within the agency to be the main point of contact, and to promote the aims of the Lakes Recreation Strategy within that agency;
- 2 Make a commitment to participate in the Lakes Recreation Forum; and
- 3 An agreement to share with other members of the Lakes Recreation Forum any relevant research data and information relating to recreation in the Lakes gathered by the agency.



Chapter 3: Recreational Use Management

3.1 The Rotorua Lakes: Characteristics and Recreational Use

3.1.1 Each of the Rotorua Lakes are unique. Different lakes have different characteristics and different recreational use patterns, and may require specific recreation management decisions (guided by the policy in this Strategy). The following is a brief description of each of the Rotorua Lakes included in this Strategy, and their recreational use.

3.1.2 Lake Rotorua

Lake Rotorua is large and shallow (average 20 metres depth). It has high nutrient inputs from the surrounding farmland and urban area, which gives the lake poor water quality. This limits the lake's popularity for contact recreation, but the lake's size, accessibility to Rotorua and good facilities make it popular for commercial boating, rowing and trout fishing.

3.1.3 Lake Rotoiti

Lake Rotoiti is also a large lake with good road access. It is around twice as deep, and more sheltered, than Lake Rotorua. Until recently it was a very popular fishing and recreation destination. Lake Rotoiti's water quality has declined over recent years, and now has frequent cyanobacterial blooms over the summer months with associated health warnings. This has moved some recreational activity to other, cleaner lakes during the summer. The lake is still relatively popular and valued despite the water quality decline.

3.1.4 Lake Rotoehu

Lake Rotoehu is shallow, and sheltered with a number of lake arms. It has poor water quality and hornwort infestation. Recreational use is more local, including fishing and boating.

3.1.5 Lake Rotoma

Lake Rotoma has the best water quality of the Rotorua lakes. It lacks most lake weeds and is relatively deep. It is a popular recreation destination for a range of activities, drawing users more from Whakatane, Kawerau and surrounds.



3.1.6 Lakes Okareka and Tarawera

Lakes Okareka and Tarawera currently have good water quality and catchments with low intensity land use, relative to the other Rotorua Lakes. The lakes are noted for their scenic qualities. Lakeside settlements are located on the western shores of both lakes. Te Rata Bay (Hot Water Beach) in the isolated southern arm of Lake Tarawera is a popular destination, for both commercial and public users. The recreational use of Lake Tarawera and Okareka appears to have increased in recent years. This may be linked to declining water quality in other lakes such as Rotoiti and Rotorua. The lakes tend to carry the recreational user displacement from Tikitapu's lake closures over the summer months.

3.1.7 Lake Rotomahana

Lake Rotomahana is the deepest of the Rotorua Lakes, and has active geothermal sites and hot springs. There is no public road access to the lake. Water quality is stable, and free from lake weeds. This means the lake is highly valued for scenic recreational use like fishing and boating, but has low levels of recreational users.

3.1.8 Lake Okataina

Lake Okataina, like Lake Rotomahana, is valued as a 'wilderness' lake, surrounded by forest, with limited lake access, very limited shore development, and good water quality. A boat speed restriction is in place to minimise noisy surface water activities (e.g. water skiing) while allowing self-powered craft and anglers' boats. The lake is popular with those seeking a remote recreational experience throughout the year, and especially during summer.

3.1.9 Lake Tikitapu (Blue Lake)

Lake Tikitapu's water chemistry limits lake weed and native lake plant growth compared to other lakes. Water quality is moderate. The lake has scenic tree-covered hillsides around it. The lake has good road access to Rotorua and three other lakes (Rotorua, Tarawera, Okareka), and a holiday accommodation park is located beside the lake. This provides an excellent venue for lake-based recreational events and competitions. The lake is also very popular for a variety of water-based recreation throughout the summer months, like swimming, picnicking, and water skiing.

3.1.10 Lake Rerewhakaaitu and Lake Okaro

Lake Rerewhakaaitu is shallow, with a maximum depth of just over 15 metres. The lake's water quality is moderate. It is the highest of the Rotorua Lakes (438 metres), so the weather on the lake can often be cool and breezy. Lake Okaro is smaller but has a similar depth. Its water quality is the most degraded of all the Rotorua Lakes but the lake is more sheltered than Lake Rerewhakaaitu.

Both lakes are relatively popular for recreational use, mainly from local area residents. However recreational use of Lake Okaro drops off during the summer/autumn period as extensive cyanobacteria blooms prompt health warnings during that time. Recreational uses of the lakes include fishing and water skiing.



3.1.11 Lake Rotokakahi and Lake Rotokawau

Lakes Rotokakahi (Green Lake) and Rotokawau are privately owned. As they are not available for public recreational use, the Strategy does not cover these lakes.

3.2 Recreational Use Trends

3.2.1 Each of the eleven Rotorua Lakes covered by this Strategy has its own unique lake and catchment characteristics, which influence its recreational use. This makes monitoring of trends in recreational use challenging. Members of the Technical Working Group Trends have identified a set of trends, based on their own observation, experience with lakes management, and working with a wide range of recreational users.

3.2.2 Trend 1: Increase in tourist numbers to Rotorua

According to the Destination Rotorua Tourism Marketing website, to the year ending December 2004 almost 1.4 million overnight visitor arrivals were recorded into Rotorua. The Tourism Research Council New Zealand (TRCNZ) forecasts that international visitor nights spent in Rotorua will increase 5.9% annually from 2003. Total tourism expenditure in Rotorua for the year ended December 2003 is estimated at \$567 million by the TRCNZ and is forecast to grow by 6.4% annually to reach \$877 million by 2010.

A 2005 Lake Water Quality Perceptions Survey showed that 54% of visitors to the Rotorua District strongly agree that the Rotorua Lakes are crucial to Rotorua tourism. A further 34% 'agree' with this statement. This importance is also shown by the fact that 20% to 27% of respondents said that perception of lake quality would have a moderate or large effect on their travel to Rotorua.

3.2.3 Trend 2: Increase in number and size of motorised boats.

Overall use of the Rotorua Lakes is increasing, and motorised craft are increasing in both number and size. This trend is likely to be fuelled by increased personal wealth and recreation time, willingness to travel long distances to a lake destination, combined with the enjoyment and status of boat ownership.

3.2.4 Trend 3: Increased opportunities for organised recreation and commercial ventures.

Tourist numbers visiting Rotorua and the Bay of Plenty continue to grow. By 2010, the Bay of Plenty is expected to receive 23.6% more visitors than in 2004 (TRCNZ 2004). Some fishing guide services and boat tours have started within the past ten years, but there is still a large untapped market potential for 'organised' recreation and associated commercial ventures to attract tourism dollars.

3.2.5 Trend 4: Seasonally dependent recreation

Recreational use of the Rotorua lakes is seasonally dependant. School holidays, public holidays, major lake sporting events and fishing seasons greatly affect visitor numbers, leading to very high levels of use at certain times of the year, and relatively little during the winter months.



3.2.6 Trend 5: Increased recreation pressure on lakes with good water quality.

Algal blooms, cyanobacterial blooms, weed infestation and weather patterns to a lesser extent have been affecting numbers of recreational users on a lake. Observation and research indicates that when a lake’s water quality is perceived as poor, or the lake has a health warning on it, many users are diverted to other lakes. As a result, ‘cleaner’ lakes have increased recreation pressure. For example, use of Lake Tarawera and Okareka has increased in recent years, while use of Rotorua and Rotoiti has declined. This displacement of users by declining lake quality is an important issue for lake recreation managers to be aware of.

3.3 Recreation Value of the Rotorua Lakes: the ROS Approach.

3.3.1 When a person wants to undertake an activity on a lake, they head to a location that suits their needs. Different locations have different characteristics: physical, biological, social – a unique ‘sense of place’. Given the wide range of recreational activities and the diverse range of locations available to the public, a variety of management approaches are required.

3.3.2 To help objectively determine the character of these diverse Rotorua Lakes locations, the Strategy uses the Recreational Opportunities Spectrum (ROS) as a basis for policy development. ROS is widely used by the Department of Conservation, and has been applied here to form a Rotorua Lakes recreation management regime. The ROS Continuum, presented below (Figure 2), categorises land areas on a scale from ‘Urban’ to ‘Wilderness’ based on a number of characteristics, like accessibility, facilities, etc. Each category has its own recreational management regimes to address its specific issues.

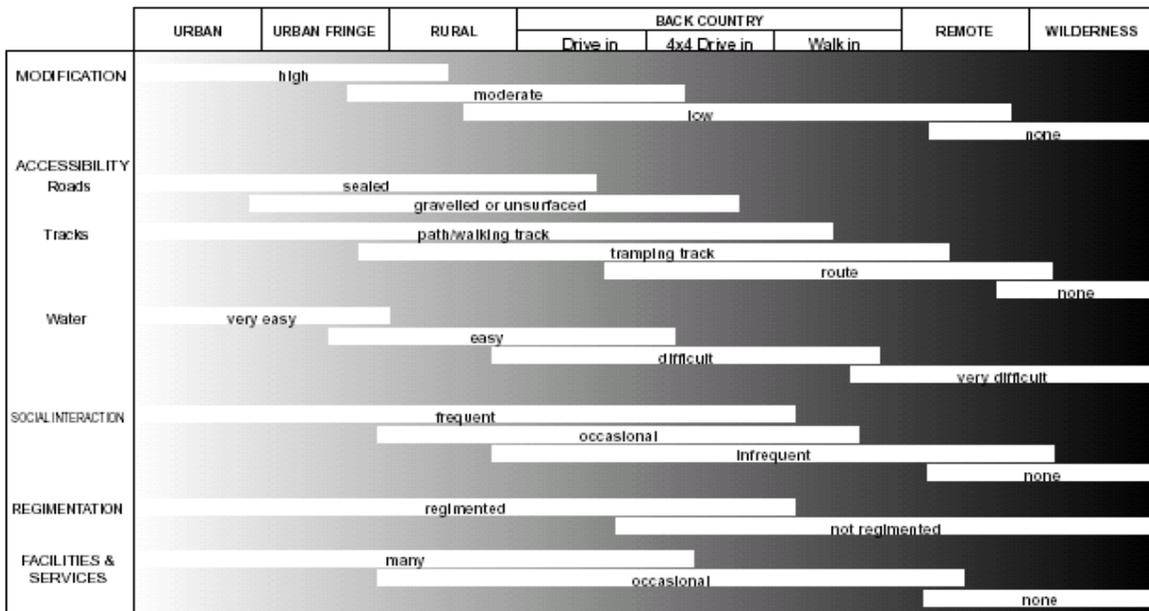


Figure 2 Recreation Opportunities Spectrum



3.4 Adapting ROS to Local Circumstances

- 3.4.1 It is important to note that ROS was developed for use at a national level rather than a local level, and for land environments rather than lake environments. It is a ‘broad brush’ classification system that does not consider local perspectives. Therefore this Strategy modifies the ROS to suit the specifics of the Rotorua Lakes.
- 3.4.2 For example, as a national classification ROS does not distinguish between the urban area at the Rotorua city lakefront, and the urban lakeside settlements at Tarawera and Okareka. But from a local perspective, the former is a developed urban environment, while the latter is lower density residential with fewer associated services or facilities. Despite being categorised as “urban fringe”, the Tarawera and Okareka settlements still retain a moderate degree of naturalness and provide a different recreational experience to the Rotorua city lakefront.
- 3.4.3 In the Rotorua Lakes context, the following categories are more apt for classifying appropriate recreational opportunities at specific lake locations. The map in Appendix 1 shows these management categories across the Rotorua lakes.
- 3.4.4 The **Port** category area is highly modified by human activities, and has a high level of accessibility and services. The management regime is highly organized: extensive signage, commercial operations, and priority use to organised forms of recreation. Priority in port areas is facilitating the mix of commercial and organised recreational uses, and providing a safe, well-managed environment.

The Port category covers a small area around the Rotorua city lakefront.

- 3.4.5 **Front Country Accessible** is a category that indicates good road accessibility and nearby public facilities. The access, facilities, and proximity to built-up areas attract a wide range of recreational uses: swimming, fishing, motorised and non-motorised craft, etc. Shoreline settings vary, but in general they contain structural elements such as jetties, boat sheds, houses and public facilities.

Front Country Accessible lake areas are often used to get to parts of the lakes with no road access. This can generate a certain level of high-speed boat traffic. Some rules, zones and segregation are often needed to avoid recreational use conflict.

Front Country Accessible areas cover all of Lake Okareka and Lake Tikitapu, most of Lake Rotorua, and around the settlement areas of Lake Tarawera, Lake Rotoiti, and Lake Rotoma.

- 3.4.6 Areas categorised as **Back Country Accessible** are more difficult to access by road. Services and facilities for users tend to be basic or non-existent. These areas have an element of remoteness. Yet because they are close to urban areas, Back Country Accessible areas can be very popular for many different forms of recreation.

While safety and navigation rules remain important, recreational use management is more informal in these areas. During high use times or in high-use places, conflict resolution between competing user groups is an important management consideration, prioritising non-motorised recreation over motorised recreation where appropriate to maintain the ‘back country’ character.



Some interpretive material and basic facilities should be available but should blend in with the natural surroundings rather than stand out.

Back Country Accessible areas cover half of Lake Rotoiti, Lake Okataina, Lake Tarawera, most of Lake Rotoma, and all of Lake Rerewhakaaitu, Lake Okaro and Lake Rotoehu.

- 3.4.7 **Remote** areas are those dominated by their natural lake and landscape characteristics: views of native vegetation and exotic forestry, relative quiet, and fewer recreational users. Remote areas have no vehicle access, though they can be accessed via water (especially for motorboats) and walking tracks. Non-intrusive forms of recreation are most suitable for these areas, like: fishing, low-speed small boating, kayaking, swimming etc. Public facilities and access points tend to be minimal, where provided at all.

Remote areas should contain some signs, navigation aids and facilities for safety, health and navigation purposes, but these should be secondary to preserving the natural characteristics of the remote areas.

Areas in the Remote category include: the southern half of Lake Okataina, all of Lake Rotomahana, and Lake Tarawera east of Te Toitōi Point to Moura Point, excluding the far eastern arm.

- 3.4.8 Even though most lake areas in these categories are readily accessible by boats, especially motorboats, this does not mean that these areas should be managed according to this lowest common denominator (accessibility). Just because Lake Tarawera has numerous access points and recreational activity on the western shores does not mean that lake managers must assume or condone that level and type of activity around the western shores for the rest of the lake. Instead, the Strategy encourages management of the diverse range of recreational activities in accordance with the characteristics of the different lake areas, as categorised above.
- 3.4.9 Table 1 below sets out these categories and management approaches in more detail. Note that the management approaches in this table are not extensive or inflexible. They are guidelines to illustrate how the management policy in this chapter can be worked out in practice.



Table 2 Management of Lake Zones (also refer to Appendix 1: Recreation Map)

	Port	Front Country Accessible	Back Country Accessible	Remote
<i>Management Focus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating multiple uses. Efficiency for commercial operators and other organised recreation. Safety of boats, other craft, and users. Avoiding weed spread. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe, multiple uses, especially informal local use. Management of conflict between 'active' and 'passive' recreation, and between different user groups. Special events management. Avoiding weed spread. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of conflict between 'active' and 'passive' recreation, and between different user groups. Promoting the 'back country' character of the lake area. Avoiding weed spread. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protecting the lake's remote character. Resisting development of public facilities or boat access points.
<i>Road Access Points</i>	Enhanced to allow effective use of the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain current access points. Aim to rationalise access points where appropriate. Actively discourage unauthorised access points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain current access points Avoid formation of new or unauthorised access points. 	No road access provided to these areas where this could increase a range of public recreational lake uses (e.g. power boating)
<i>Public Facilities (boat ramps, parking etc)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage private vs. public access areas Maintain boat ramps Provision of wide range of facilities including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Public toilets Litter bins Boat wash down areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restricted parking when parking is congested. Facilities to support lake use and access, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Public Toilets Boat wash down areas at or near access points Litter bins and regular rubbish collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low level of facilities at road access points including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter bins Basic toilets (e.g. composting, or advanced on-site effluent treatment) Car parking Facilities to blend into surrounds (e.g. no glare) Signs and areas for boat/trailer clearing of weeds 	Minimal public facilities provided at node points for recreational users where appropriate, for example at a beach where a tramping track meets the lake.
<i>Lake Structures</i>	Future development to this already modified environment may include wharves, jetties, dredged channels, boat ramps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jetties (public and private). Some boat ramps. Other minor structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional jetties and minor structures by houses to be discouraged. Structures should be small and blend into surrounds where possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low or zero density to match the absence of housing. Avoid development of new structures or expansion of existing ones.
<i>Activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wide range of activities, both commercial and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wide range of activities and craft, for example: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At high-use times or places, prioritise non-motorised, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waterskiing and jetskiing lanes should be phased

	Port	Front Country Accessible	Back Country Accessible	Remote
	private, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Float planes ➢ Boat tours ➢ Competitions, events ➢ Rowing and waka ama ➢ Sailing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Swimming ➢ Waterskiing ➢ Jetskiing ➢ Fishing ➢ Boating ➢ Kayaking ➢ Rowing and waka ama 	passive and less intrusive recreational uses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of activities, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Fishing ➢ Kayaking and waka ama ➢ Swimming ➢ Waterskiing 	out or discouraged. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixture of passive and occasional non-intrusive active uses. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Fishing ➢ Kayaking ➢ Sailing
<i>Signage</i>	Extensive, for commercial and regulatory purposes.	As required for statutory purposes, safety guidelines, education, lake updates and interpretation.	Signs at road access points that blend into surrounds. Minimal signs elsewhere for statutory and safety information.	Minimal signs for statutory, safety or educational information, that are small and blend into the surrounds.
<i>Navigation Aids, Access Lanes. Buoys etc.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use for safety where needed. • Access lanes are not usually provided because of multiple uses in a confined space. 	Use for general safety, provision for motorised activities, and segregation of incompatible uses, like swimmers/kayakers and boats in intensive use areas.	Use for safety, and to discourage noisy or inappropriate motorised uses where they conflict with other users or degrade the back country character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigation aids as required for safety. • No access lanes, as part of discouraging intrusive activities.
<i>Commercial Use</i>	Enabled in an appropriate and safe manner.	Allow, but control if there is conflict with casual users or biosecurity risks.	Only allow low-impact activities, like water taxis, or small kayak and fishing tours.	Only allow low impact activities, like eco-tourist boat trips, water taxi, kayak and fishing tours.

Chapter 4: Recreational Management Issues and Actions

The Technical Working Group has identified a number of management issues and actions to be addressed by this Strategy. The issues and actions are summarised below, with more detail about each of the management actions provided in Appendix 3.

4.1 Management Issue 1: Public Access to the Rotorua Lakes

Section 6(d) of the Resource Management Act 1991 lists “The maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes and rivers” as a matter of national importance to be recognised and provided for.

Rotorua District Council manages and maintains a number of access points to the Rotorua lakes. Many of these access points are associated with local reserves. DOC also maintains a number of access points. While many of these access points are widely known and well-used by the public, there are likely to be others that the public are not aware of. The Working Group identified this as a concern, especially for organisations such as Fish & Game that advocate for the provision of public access to the Rotorua Lakes.

Action 1: Complete a Rotorua Lakes Access Inventory

Rotorua District Council will complete and publish an inventory of public lake access points. This will assist the general public to find a wider range of useful access points to the Rotorua Lakes.

4.2 Management Issue 2: Sign Communication, Education and Interpretation

Communication through signs to lake users is a vital tool for recreational use management. The Technical Working Group has discussed the need to develop more co-ordinated, consistent signs around the Rotorua Lakes at key lake access points. At present, each of the management agencies tends to display their signs individually. This can be a cluttered and confusing array of information for lake users.

Education about the safe, courteous use of Rotorua Lakes, both the legal requirements and the behavioural conventions, helps different lake users to enjoy their activities safely. The Harbourmaster and his team have an important education role regarding safety and navigation, when more than sign communication is needed.



Interpretative material about the traditional relationship of Te Arawa with the Rotorua lakes has been missing from many lake edge signs. As a Rotorua Lakes management authority under the Rotorua Lakes Strategy Joint Committee, and possibly under future Treaty settlement legislation, the Te Arawa Maori Trust Board wish to display signs explaining historical and cultural information about the lakes, the need to protect wāhi tapu sites, and other sensitive or important sites within the vicinity of the Rotorua lakes.

Action 2: Development of Coordinated Sign Panels

Environment Bay of Plenty and Rotorua District Council, with assistance from other agencies, will coordinate lake edge signs around the Rotorua Lakes at key lake access points, with the following aims:

- To rationalise and enhance existing sign structures to improve public understanding of their content (safety, navigation, health, fishing, etc.)
- To assist provision of educative and interpretative material from Te Arawa Maori Trust Board.
- To give sign space for the community to post local information and temporary information, such as lake closures or community meetings.
- To calculate and disseminate the cost of the coordinated sign panels, and their maintenance and renewal, among the lake management agencies with information displayed on the signs.

Action 3: The Recreation Map (Appendix 1)

Along with the ROS spectrum, the map in Appendix 1 shows the location of existing key recreational resources, facilities and locations. Lake management organisations will make these available to recreational users to show the users where certain facilities exist and where specific recreational activities are catered for.

Distribution of the maps is also an opportunity to pass on a range of other information and advice to lake users. The reverse of the maps will be printed with items like a 'Safe Boating' guide, a 'Clean Your Boat' reminder, and a 'Code of Conduct' for lake users. Explanatory material relating to the ROS categories can also be supplied here.

Action 4: Provision of Interpretative Material by Te Arawa

Te Arawa Maori Trust Board will provide appropriate historical and cultural education and interpretation material for lake edge signs. The information can be displayed as interpretative panels on shared signboards, or in other ways.



Action 5: Public Communication and Awareness

The information contained in this Strategy will be made available to the public in the following ways:

- The recreation map in Appendix 1 will be made into a Rotorua Lakes Recreational Users Guide with a flip-side of information as described in Action 3.
- The map and key actions will be added to Environment Bay of Plenty's lakes webpages, with links from Rotorua District Council's webpage.
- The map zones and other information may be added as an overlay on the new coordinated sign panels (Action 2) at lake access points.
- Early warnings of lake closures will be more coordinated, and displayed on Environment Bay of Plenty's lakes webpages, in newsletters, or on the community sign board where possible.

4.3 **Management Issue 3: Working Together**

At present there is a tendency for each agency to work independently of each other when it comes to lakes recreation management. Each organisation pursues its own statutory responsibilities and objectives through individual monitoring, research, communication and management programmes. This results in a certain degree of overlap and repetition in the collection of data and other management activities. There are likely to be benefits to working together in a more coordinated fashion, which would improve the overall recreational management of the Rotorua lakes, and further enhance the experience of lake users.

Action 6: Establishment of a Rotorua Lakes Recreational Forum

The Harbourmaster will convene a Rotorua Lakes Recreation Forum twice per year, before and after the lake recreation peak summer period, for agency representatives to discuss lakes recreation management – the issues and the actions – at a practical level. The Forum will further the development of effective working relationships between the various groups responsible for Rotorua Lakes' recreation management.

Membership of the Forum will comprise representatives from:

- Environment Bay of Plenty (including the Harbourmaster).
- Rotorua District Council.
- Te Arawa Maori Trust Board.
- Fish & Game (Eastern Region) New Zealand.



- Department of Conservation.
- The Recreation Users Group.
- Any other organisation that the Forum agrees should be represented.

And one representative from each of the following:

- The Lake Okareka community.
- The Lake Tarawera community.
- The Lake Rotoiti community.
- The Lake Rotoehu / Rotoma community.

All of these representatives will have speaking rights at the Forum meetings.

The Rotorua Lakes Recreation Forum will report to the Rotorua Lakes Strategic Joint Committee.



Chapter 5: Monitoring and Review of The Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy

5.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The implementation and effectiveness of the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy will be monitored through the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Forum. The standing items on the Forum agenda (see Appendix 3, Action 6) will ensure that progress on the proposed Actions is monitored, and reported back to the Rotorua Lakes Joint Strategy Committee at regular intervals.

5.2 Review

The Strategy will be reviewed five years after it becomes operative, or earlier if deemed necessary by the Rotorua Lakes Strategy Joint Committee. The review will include a measurement of effectiveness, and recommendations for further actions if necessary.



Chapter 6: Conclusions

The Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy aims to ensure the continued provision of a diverse range of recreational opportunities, while providing protection for the environmental qualities that make the Rotorua Lakes such a special place.

The key agencies of Te Arawa Maori Trust Board, Rotorua District Council, Environment Bay of Plenty, Department of Conservation and Fish & Game, have worked together to develop a shared decision-making framework, and also to consider how to work together more effectively for the benefit of lake users. The output of this work is a practical and pragmatic approach that acknowledges the challenges of managing recreational activities in this diverse and dynamic environment. It is not intended to impose extra 'on-the ground' work, or to interfere with management strategies that are – on the whole – working effectively. Rather, the Strategy provides managing agencies with a shared understanding of the policies that will contribute to effective and coherent management of recreation in the Rotorua Lakes area, based on an appreciation of the inherent environmental qualities of the lakes.

The vision that guides the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy is one that encourages a wide range of recreational uses, while protecting the very qualities that draw people to the Lakes. In this way, the enjoyment goal that *'the public can obtain the greatest possible pleasure from the lakes in the Rotorua district'* will be achieved.

Technical Working Group, July 2005



Appendices

<i>Appendix I.....</i>	<i>Recreation Map</i>
<i>Appendix II.....</i>	<i>Implications of the Te Arawa Rotorua Lakes Treaty of Waitangi Claim Settlement</i>
<i>Appendix III.....</i>	<i>Management Actions</i>



Appendix I – Recreation Map



Appendix II - Implications of the Te Arawa Rotorua Lakes Treaty of Waitangi Claim Settlement

The impending settlement of Te Arawa's Treaty of Waitangi Rotorua Lakes claim with the Crown will provide another facet to the policy framework which includes the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy.

In October 2004, Te Arawa initialled a Deed of Settlement offered by the Crown which included the vesting of ownership of the following lakebeds in Te Arawa: Rotorua, Rotoiti, Rotoehu, Rotoma, Okataina, Tarawera, Okareka, Tikitapu, Rotomahana, Rerewhakaaitu; and Ngahewa, Ngapouri, Rotowhero which are in the Waikato Region and not covered by this Strategy. The Crown will still own the lake water column and air above the lake, currently managed by Land Information New Zealand.

In terms of recreation, the Deed of Settlement indicates that under the changed ownership regime, recreational activities will continue to be permitted to take place on or in the lakes at no charge to the public. The existing regulatory framework will continue to apply regardless of ownership, excluding any minor changes through the settlement legislation when approved by Parliament. Public navigation rights will continue.

At the present time, the full implications of the lake bed ownership change on management responsibilities has not been determined. Revised management frameworks will require further discussion between Te Arawa, Rotorua District Council and Environment Bay of Plenty.

Te Arawa Maori Trust Board has provided input to this Strategy through the Technical Working Group, and Te Arawa's continued involvement is expected through the Rotorua Lakes Strategy Joint Committee and the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Forum.



Appendix III - Management Actions

Action 1: Complete a Rotorua Lakes Access Inventory

Lead agency: Rotorua District Council.

Other agencies: Environment Bay of Plenty, Department of Conservation.

Project: To provide the public and lakes management agencies with comprehensive information about public access to the Rotorua Lakes. This includes access from reserves, boat access points, access from Department of Conservation land, access from private land, and so on. At present this access information is held in different formats and locations.

The inventory will require a project coordinator to organise collection and publication of the necessary data. Each agency will be asked to provide its public access information to the coordinator. The resulting maps will be available for the public and management agencies to use.

Resources: Staff time, mainly for the project co-ordinator. Environment Bay of Plenty's GIS resources to map the collected information. Publication costs, including website publication.

Timeframe: To be completed one year after the Strategy becomes operative.

Measure: Publication of the Rotorua Lakes Access Inventory.

Action 2: Development of Coordinated Sign Panels

Lead agencies: Rotorua District Council (Parks and Reserves), Environment Bay of Plenty.

Other agencies: Department of Conservation, Fish and Game, Te Arawa Maori Trust Board, local community representatives.

Project: Coordinated Rotorua Lakes signage has been considered several times in the past. Environment Bay of Plenty has (at the time of the Strategy adoption) received quotes for construction of new sign kiosks that will contain the majority of the sign information in one visually prominent place. An extra sign panel will be included for local community information.



From this point, all agencies with lake edge signs will need to work together to agree on the content, size, shape, structure, location, placement, costs, and maintenance of the signs. The coordinator of this management action will need to consider:

- 3.4.4.1 Who: Identification of agencies with an interest in the project, including the various departments within those agencies who will need to be involved.
- 3.4.4.2 What: Sign structure design. Identifying the sign information and display requirements from each agency.
- 3.4.4.3 Where: Suitable locations for shared signs.
- 3.4.4.4 When: Timeframes and milestones.
- 3.4.4.5 How much: Total cost and how to divide this cost among the management agencies.

A project coordinator will need to be appointed by agreement by Rotorua District Council and Environment Bay of Plenty staff to progress this management action.

Resources: Staff time, contractors/staff to design and install signs.

Timeframe: While most of the placement and design planning can be completed within two years at most, the replacement of existing signs, with accompanying cost, may be done over a longer term.

Measure: A set of coordinated, rationalised, publicly accessible, useful and understandable signs at access points around the Rotorua Lakes.

Action 3: Provision of a Recreation Map for Public Use

Lead agency: Environment Bay of Plenty.

Other agencies: Rotorua District Council, Te Arawa Maori Trust Board, Department of Conservation, Fish and Game.

Project plan: The Rotorua Lakes recreational use map has been drawn up as part of the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy (see Appendix 1).

Primary information for the maps was drawn from all members of the Technical Working Group to present a comprehensive set of recreational opportunities on the Rotorua Lakes. The map should be reviewed, and updated if necessary, at least once every two years.

Resources: Publication cost. Environment Bay of Plenty has already covered the production costs for the maps and information as part of the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy development.



Timeframe: The completed maps should be publicly available soon after the adoption of the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy.

Measure: Publication of the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Map.

Action 4: Provision of Interpretative Material by Te Arawa

Lead Agency: Te Arawa Maori Trust Board.

Other Agencies: Rotorua District Council, Environment Bay of Plenty.

Project: During the development of the draft Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy, Te Arawa Maori Trust Board indicated that they are keen to display interpretative material on lake edge signs informing lake users about Te Arawa's traditional relationship with the Rotorua Lakes. The information, once collected in an appropriate format, can be made available to the public as interpretative panels on shared signage, or in other ways.

This Action 4 is also part of Action 3 and 5, as Te Arawa will provide information for the back of the Recreational Users Guide (Action 5) and in the longer term will display interpretative material for each lake as part of the coordinated signs explained in Action 3.

Resources: Time to collect and present appropriate information in a suitable format. Publication costs.

Timeframe: Incorporate Te Arawa material as part of the Recreational Users Guide (see Action 5) – within nine months after the Strategy adoption. Incorporate Te Arawa material as part of the coordinated signs project – part of Action 2's timeframe.

Measure: Production of interpretative material.

Action 5: Public Communication and Awareness

Lead Agency: Environment Bay of Plenty.

Other Agencies: Rotorua District Council, Fish and Game.

Project: The recreation map in Appendix 1 will be formatted into a folded brochure called the Rotorua Lakes Recreational Users Guide. It will contain the following information on the reverse side:

- Safe boating rules.
- Recreational use codes of conduct.
- Fishing seasons.
- Navigation rules.



- “Clean your boat and trailer of weeds” message.
- Cyanobacterial blooms health warning.
- Te Arawa lake history and interpretative material.

The map, the Strategy, and a summary of the Strategy that is relevant to the public will be added to Environment Bay of Plenty’s lakes webpages, with links from Rotorua District Council’s webpage.

The Harbourmaster and lake management staff will consider whether the map zones and other information are useful either as a separate sign, or as an overlay on another sign panel.

Rotorua District Council and Environment Bay of Plenty (including the Harbourmaster) will give local communities reasonable warning of lake closures through a variety of media, for example: community newsletters, Environment Bay of Plenty’s Lakes webpages, ratepayer groups, and the community sign panel (see Action 2).

Resources: Staff time: Environment Bay of Plenty’s graphics design team, text contribution from Environment Bay of Plenty, Rotorua District Council, Te Arawa Maori Trust Board, and Fish and Game. Printing costs.

Timing: The completed maps should be publicly available one year after the adoption of the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy.

Measure: Publication of the Rotorua Lakes Recreational Users Guide.

Action 6: Establishment of a Rotorua Lakes Recreation Forum

Lead Agency: Environment Bay of Plenty (Harbourmaster)

Other Agencies: Rotorua District Council, Te Arawa Maori Trust Board, Department of Conservation, Fish & Game, Rotoiti, Rotoehu/Rotoma and Tarawera/Okareka communities, Recreation User Group.

Project: The Strategy’s Technical Working Group meetings were a good opportunity for the various management agencies with an interest in lake recreation issues to meet and discuss their work programmes. The Strategy recognises the tendency for individual agencies to work independently of one another. As part of working towards a shared vision and strategy for Rotorua Lakes recreation management, a Rotorua Lakes Recreation Forum will be established. The Forum will consist of lake management and community representatives meeting bi-annually to discuss a range to lake recreation issues.

Standing items on the Forum Agenda will include:

- Informing members about projects and things-to-do for the high-use recreation period (pre-summer), and reporting back on the



high-use recreation period – highlighting any important issues, projects or tasks (post-summer).

- Reporting any new data or research available (for example, Department of Conservation’s campsite and track use).
- Updates from any specific projects likely to impact on lakes recreation, e.g. the Rotorua Lakes Aquatic Pest Strategy.
- Monitoring of commercial use and activity.
- Effects of lake water quality and aquatic weed changes on recreational lake use.

Other possible items to include on the Recreation Forum agenda:

- Review of the lake closures policy (within one year after the Strategy becomes operative).
- Problems or conflicts experienced by specific recreational groups, and segregated areas if necessary.
- Implementation monitoring of the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Strategy.
- Identification of ways to improve recreation on the Rotorua Lakes.
- A ‘watching brief’ on any external issues that may impact on future recreational use. For example: lakes water quality issues, aquatic pests, etc.

Resources: Meeting costs of no more than \$150 per meeting, to be covered by the host agency.

Timeframe: Forum meetings will be timed to coincide with the start and end of each ‘summer season’. The first meeting will take place when appropriate following final adoption of the Strategy.

Measure: Minutes from the Rotorua Lakes Recreation Forum meetings.

