Lake Rotorua Timeline

About 200,000 years ago Lake Rotorua is formed in a caldera (crater caused by a volcanic eruption). and is bigger and deeper than the lake today. Subsequent eruptions form Mokoia Island and Mount Ngongotahā.

1880s

1300s

The Te Arawa

people move inland

and settle around

the Rotorua and

Taupo Lake areas.

Rotorua established as a spa destination for tourists which continues to thrive, despite the tragedy of the 1886 Tarawera eruption.

Trout and other fish introduced to Lake Rotorua.

> 1890s Pastoral farming and cropping begins, with 1700 ha by 1896.

1950s

Land development accelerates with aerial topdressing of fertiliser leading to widespread development of pastoral farming.

1970s

Noongotahā and eastern areas of Rotorua reticulated: wastewater treatment plant progressively upgraded although still discharging treated effluent to the lake.

The Rotorua wastewater treatment plant completed 1974.

1991

Treated sewage is discharged to land, not the lake. Commissioning of the Rotorua sewage treatment plant upgrade, incorporating the spray irrigation discharge to the Whakarewarewa forest. The nitrogen load to the lake was reduced to about 20% of previous levels.

Deed of Settlement signed by Te Arawa

2004

2002

Rule 11 proposed to

cap nutrient losses

as part of the wider

Regional Water and

in the catchment

Land Plan.

and the Crown, with the subsequent 2006 legislation creating the Te Arawa Lakes Trust and formalising the Rotorua Te Arawa Lakes Strategy Group with the Trust, BOPRC and RDC as partners.

About 22,000 years ago Lake levels drop by about 30m when the caldera collapses. Ōhau channel is formed.

About 1830 Pakeha settlement begins when Maketūbased trader Philip Tapsell visits Rotorua and subsequently marries into Te Arawa.

1920s

Farm blocks balloted by Government but prone to bush sickness due to cobalt deficiency, with some blocks reverting to scrub, broome and gorse.

Rotorua township development continues and becomes a borough in 1922.

1960s

Rotorua declared a city in 1962.

Land conversion from bush to pasture largely completed.

Sheep numbers peaked at more than 800,000 in 1967 before falling as farms intensified with dairy and deer conversion.

1970s and 1980s

The Upper Kaituna Catchment Control Scheme was initiated in 1975 to promote soil conservation and control lake levels. Most works took place during the 1980s and attracted generous Government subsidies, including:

- Fencing and planting of stream margins
- Gully erosion controls and planting/retirement of steep slopes
- Flood protection stopbanks through the Rotorua urban area, plus stream clearing, straightening and construction of floodways on Ngongotahā and Waiteti Streams.
- Level control structures on Lakes Rotorua (Ōhau Channel stop logs) and Rotoiti (Ōkere control gates).

Options to reduce nutrient sewage nutrient inputs were also assessed under this scheme, including the proposed Rotorua-Kaituna pipeline which was abandoned after a critical Waitangi Tribunal report.

2005 efficiency.



2006

Utuhina Stream P locking plant commissioned, reducing lake phosphorus load by 2 tonnes annually.

2009

Brunswick / Rotokawa sewerage scheme works completed.

Lake Rotorua-Rotoiti Action Plan finalised.

Puarenga P locking plant commissioned, reducing annual lake phosphorus load by a further 2 tonnes.

Methanol dosing at the wastewater treatment plant to improve treatment

2008

Hinemoa Point sewerage scheme works completed.

2009-2011

Land management and land use change actions agreed between BOPRC and several landowners with financial assistance, reducing annual nitrogen loads by about 4 tonnes.

