

Hokianga Accord Update #38

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Next Hokianga Accord hui

Due to overwhelming commitments on the organising committee there will not be another Hokianga Accord hui this year. A Working Group hui was held mid-November and that is likely to be the last for 2010, unless something unexpected arises. The next hui is expected in April 2011, details will be provided as soon as they are confirmed. April is appropriate as it signals the sixth anniversary of our mid north iwi fisheries forum.

Acknowledgements

Ngapuhi and Ngati Whatua are grateful for the ongoing support from many iwi, hapu and whanau as we maintain and strengthen the relationships developed through the Hokianga Accord.

Fishing interests, and particularly our non-commercial interests, are just one aspect of the myriad of issues requiring our attention.

Fortunately, through the Accord, we have built strong bonds with environmental and recreational fishing organisations that assist our forum to advocate for the interests of our mokopuna [descendants].

Accord chairman, George Riley, was recently quoted as saying, "We only need to stop and consider what our grandfathers left us, and compare that with the fisheries we have to pass onto our mokopuna to realise the extent of damage done to our marine resources".

With the focus firmly tied to the common objective of "more fish in the water/kia maha atu nga ika ki roto i te wai", mid north iwi are well placed to face any challenges to our fishing rights in 2011.

Unjustified wait for Ministerial approval

There is no clear explanation why Ministerial approval has not been given to either Te Puna Mataitai in the northern Bay of Islands or the rahui application for Maunganui Bay (Deep Water Cove) in the southern Bay. Both applications fulfil Ministry of Fisheries' requirements and enjoy widespread community support.

Most encouraging for the local Kaitiaki [guardians] is the wholesome support from the Bay of Islands Swordfish Club for these measures that are designed to enhance protection of the sea and increase fish numbers.

Also pleasing is the increasing public awareness of the Kaitiaki [guardianship] responsibilities that tangata whenua have, to nurture the marine environment, fisheries and people.

This understanding has come through spending many days and nights together at Hokianga Accord hui, talking about matters of mutual concern.

Hopefully we will soon be celebrating the successful approval and implementation of both these Bay of Islands initiatives.

Management decisions

Over the past month the Accord has reviewed a number of management decisions related to earlier MFish proposals. Little account has been taken of the concerns expressed in our joint submissions. Most concerning was the need for fisheries managers to acknowledge the lack of information and be cautious until more is known.

More precautionary management aligns with the purpose of the Fisheries Act 1996, which is to manage fisheries sustainably so people can provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being.

As Fisheries Minister it is Phil Heatley's job to ensure there are enough fish available inshore so all New Zealanders, whether Maori or non-Maori, can provide for the needs of their children and future generations.

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