



**Lincoln
University**
Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki
AOTEAROA • NEW ZEALAND



State of Recreation at Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere 2015

Ken Hughey

Department of Environmental Management, Lincoln University

Waihora Ellesmere Trust

19th November 2015

New Zealand's specialist land-based university

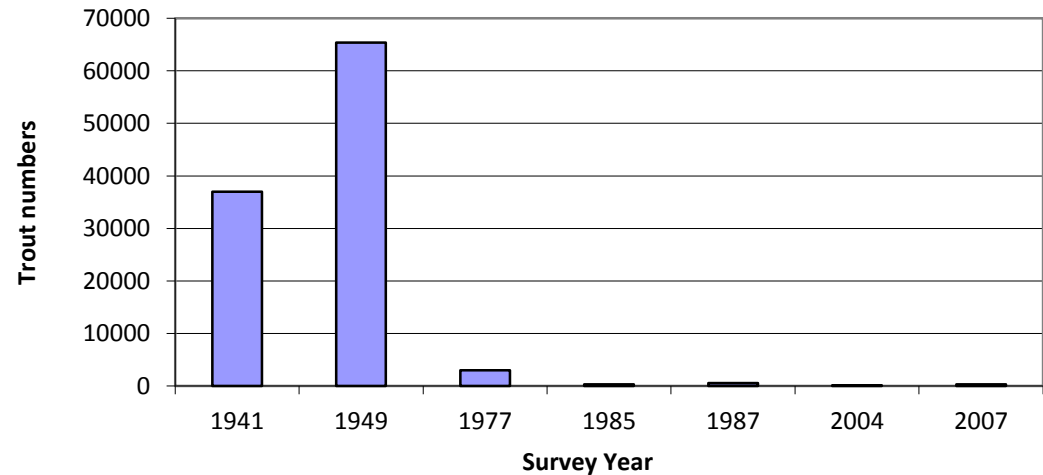
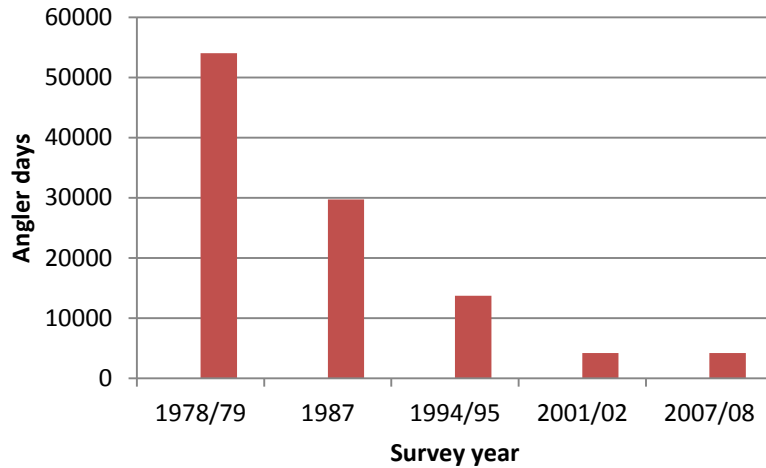
What I will cover

- The information or continued lack thereof context
- Reminder of the 2013 position and our one update for 2015
- Lake level and recreation considerations
- Access issues – appropriate and totally inappropriate
- Recommendations

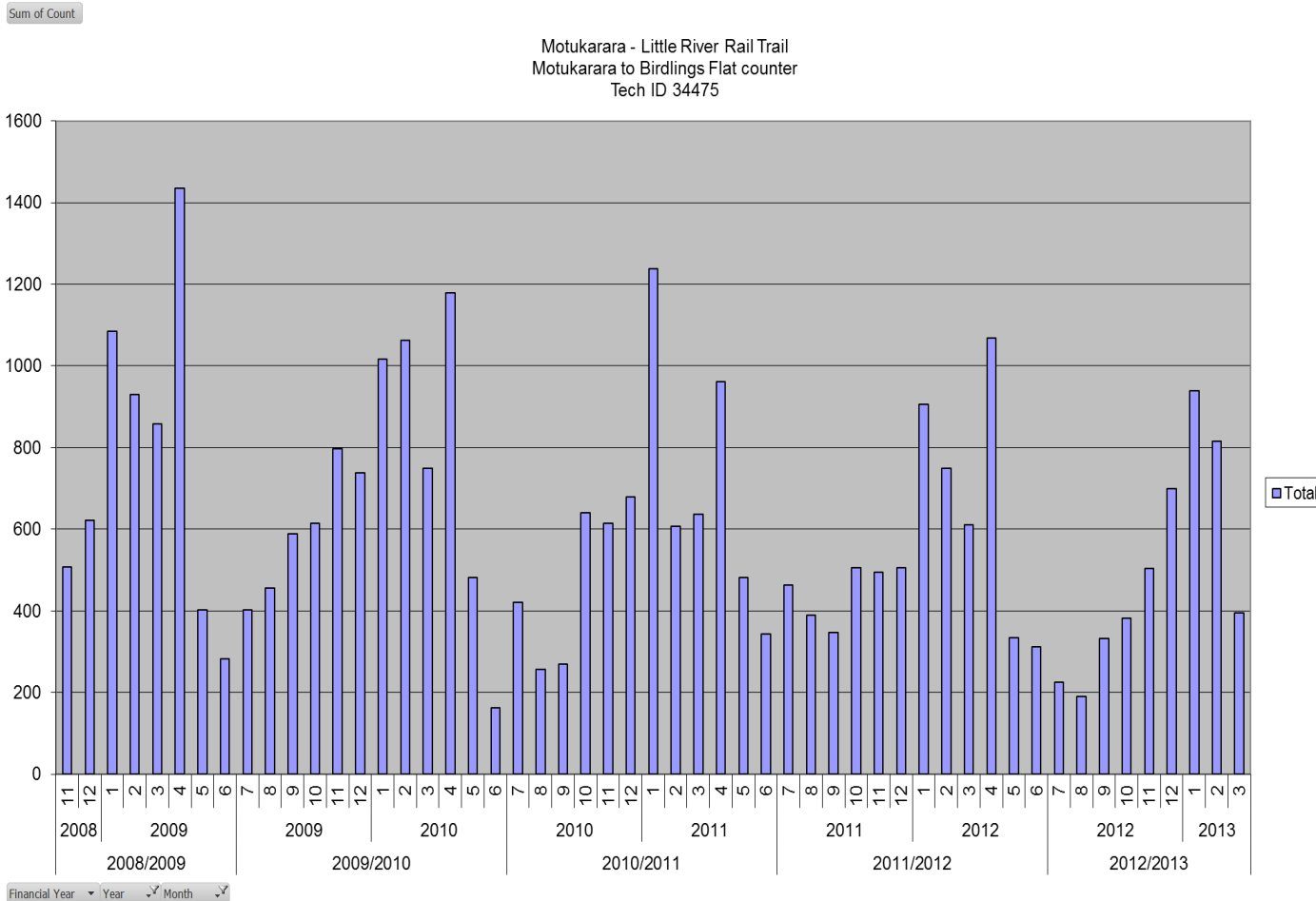
Activity classes and information availability and traffic light reliability assessment

Activity class	Activity type	Numbers users /trends	Locations of activity	Perceptions - +ve or -ve
A. Wildlife dependent	Fishing – trout	Quantitative, time series	Expert knowledge	Expert knowledge
	Fishing – whitebait	Expert knowledge	Expert knowledge	No information
	Waterfowl hunting	Quantitative, time series	Quantitative, time series	Expert knowledge
	Bird watching	Quantitative, Expert knowledge	Expert knowledge	Expert knowledge
B. Water- based	Swimming	Expert knowledge	Expert knowledge	No information
	Boating - yachts	Quantitative, expert knowledge	Expert knowledge	Expert knowledge
	Boating – water skiing	Quantitative, expert knowledge	Expert knowledge	Expert knowledge
	Boating – power	Quantitative, expert knowledge	Expert knowledge	Expert knowledge
	Boating – wind surfing	Quantitative, expert knowledge	Expert knowledge	Expert knowledge
C. Land-based	Cycling	Quantitative	Quantitative	Expert knowledge
	Photography	Qualitative	Expert knowledge	Expert knowledge
	Walking	Qualitative	Expert knowledge	Qualitative
	Picnicking	Qualitative	Expert knowledge	Qualitative

State – trout angling and trout numbers: ongoing periodic monitoring via national angler survey – awaiting current survey data



Cycling – Little River Rail Trail use – good ongoing monitoring: the only new recreation data for 2015!



Overall State of recreation activities

Activity	Highest historic levels of use – recreation user days per annum	Estimated level of use 2015 – recreation use days (range)	State assessment
Trout angling	100,000 – probably in the 1960s	3300-5100	For trophy trout good, but for other reasons bad
Cycling on Rail Trail	6000-7000 – contemporary activity	6000-7000	Static but being developed
Waterfowl hunting	5000-10000 – probably much more activity before habitat loss	4000-6000	Probably static
Boating, including windsurfing	10000-20000 – huge regattas held in 20s through to 40s	1500-3000	Mixed – hopeless for power boating/yachting; good for windsurfing
Bird watching	1000 – 1980s onward	500-1500	Probably static
Other – whitebaiting	10000-20000 – likely to have been very large numbers in 1920s through to early 1960s, esp picnickers	0-2000	Whitebaiting: Depends on lake opening in spring
Walking		1000-5000	Walking: Rail trail and other initiatives improving it
Picnicking		1000-5000	Picnicking: Mixed opportunities – Lower Selwyn Huts good
Other (e.g., eeling, floundering, photography, 4WD driving, camping at Lakeside and geocaching)		1000-2000	Other: Mixed – flounders good some years, etc
Total	Lower range	132000	
	Mid range	145000	
	Upper range	158000	

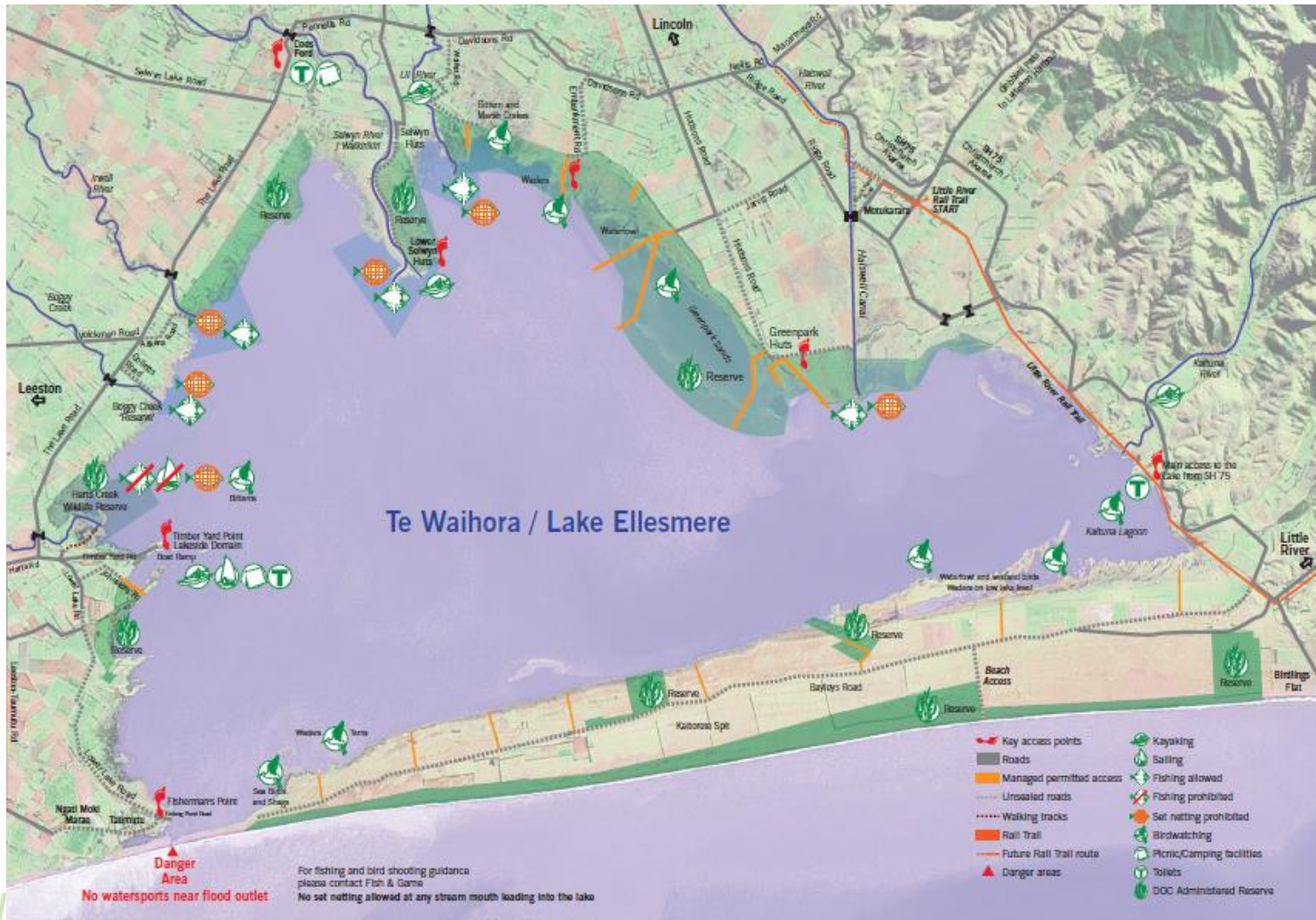
Pressures (and Driving Forces) and Responses

Activity	Pressure assessment	Driving Force	Response assessment
Trout angling	Huge reduction in trout numbers	Water quality due to land use intensification etc; Habitat loss	CWMS – ZIP; minimum flows and associated flow enhancement: potential to improve
Cycling on Rail Trail	Lake flies	Water quality due to land use intensification	CWMS – ZIP; minimum flows – unlikely to see any change
Waterfowl hunting			
Boating, including windsurfing	Water quality; lake levels	Land use intensification; lake level management regime	CWMS – ZIP; unlikely to see any improvement in the short to medium terms
Bird watching	Conflict with other users esp year-round with goose hunters; lake level management	Government change in geese status; Long summer openings detrimental	Needs regulatory change – no action undertaken
Other – whitebaiting	Inappropriate lake opening regime	Historic way regime operated	Lake Opening Protocol Group – better focus on fisheries
Walking			
Picnicking	Lake flies	Water quality due to land use intensification	CWMS – ZIP; minimum flows
Other (e.g., eeling, floundering, photography, 4WD driving, camping at Lakeside and geocaching)	Mixed	Mixed	CWMS – ZIP; minimum flows

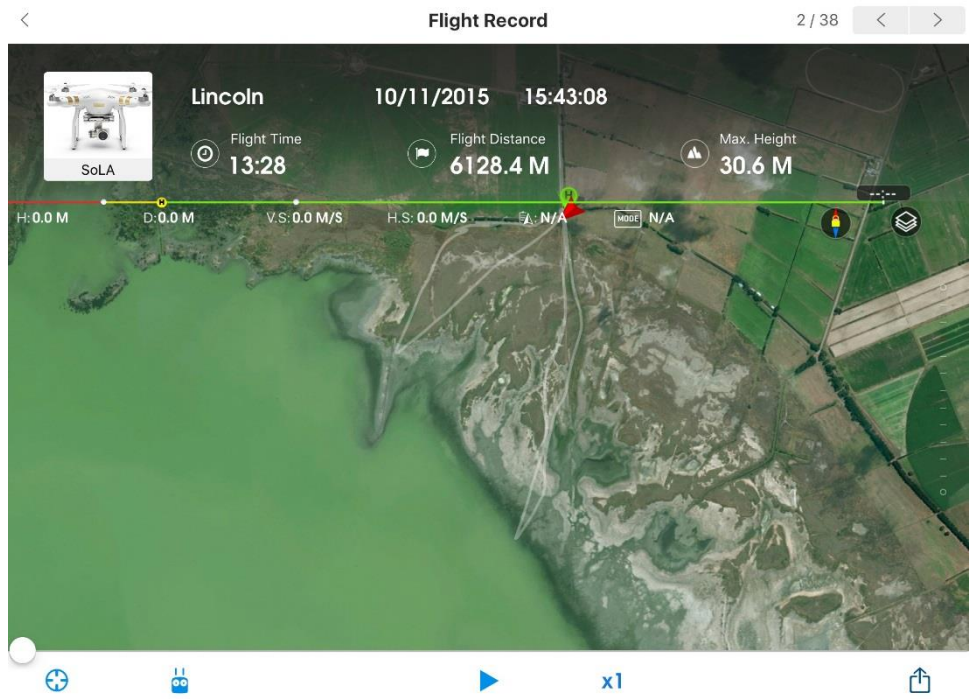
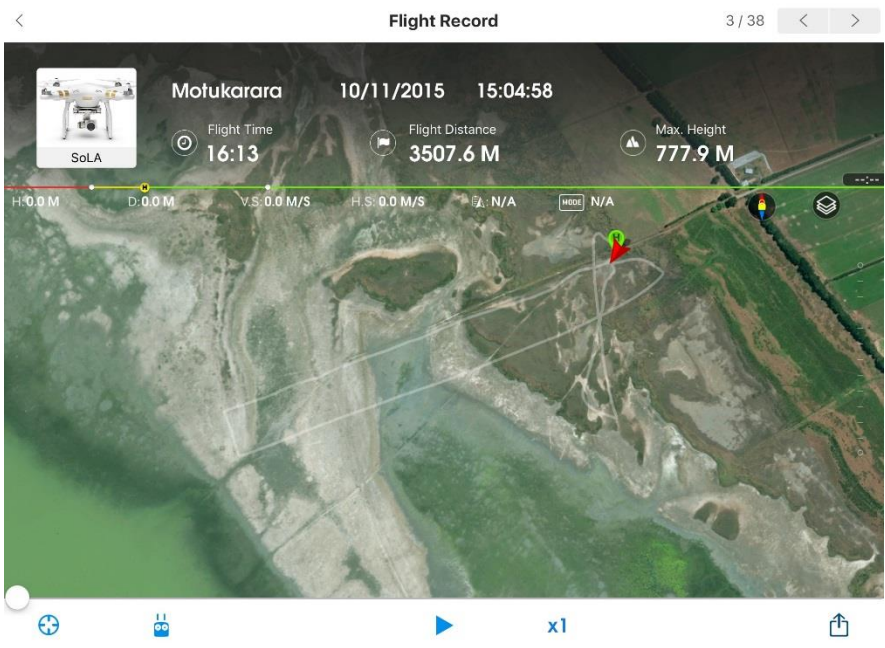
Assessment of some of the key high use values against lake level regime over last two years:

Value	Lake level regime	Good for value	Indifferent for value	Bad for value
Bird watching	Low over summer			Mixed outcomes but some of most preferred wading bird habitat dries out; some species nesting habitat destroyed
Duck shooting	Low in autumn		According to Fish & Game it is the weather that matters	
Boating – of all sorts	Low over summer			Too shallow, too everything ...
Cycling on rail trail	Low over summer		Hard to say – might keep lake flies further away but also limits access to easy views of wildlife	

Appropriate access to Te Waihora



Inappropriate vehicle use – the following two maps show drone paths that lead to the video footage I am about to show



Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall conclusions:

- State of recreation remains still hugely reduced, in terms of numbers participating and probably also in terms of quality of activities compared to 1980s and earlier
- Some activities continue to perform very strongly – cycling for example; some very poorly – recreational trout fishing
- Only recreational trout fishing is performing extremely badly, although low lake levels over past 2 summers probably worsened conditions for recreational boaties
- Pressures and responses, often water quality related, will take time to see changes

Recommendations:

- Record user days per annum statistics for: trout angling, waterfowl hunting, whitebaiting, cycling, bird watching, walking and picnicking;
- Undertake quality of activity measures – size & number of trout, number of waterfowl, access & other visitor-related facilities & provisions including improved signage, ‘walk ways’, boat ramps including for kayaks on the L2, water level and quality parameters by activity
- Establish an expert panel of users to help inform the above and to provide information over the next 2 years
- **STOP VEHICLES WREAKING HAVOC ON A HABITAT OF INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE**