**DRAFT MINUTES from meeting of Rotorua Lakes Community Board Meeting held 11 December 2023:**

**Golden Clams update**

Phill Thomass, Chair, Rotorua Lakes Community Board, introduced the following attendees:

* John Brightwater, Response Manager, Biosecurity Response, Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI).
* David Yard, Principle Response Manager, Biosecurity Response, Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI).
* William Anaru Biosecurity Manager Te Arawa Lakes Trust (TALT).
* Daryn Bean, CEO Te Arawa Lakes Trust (TALT).
* Te Wakaunua Te Kurapa, Biosecurity Officer, Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC).
* Greg Corbett, Biosecurity Manager, BOPRC.
* Ron Pitkethley, Manager Active & Engaged Communities, Rotorua Lakes Council (RLC).
* Peter MacMillan, Lakes Community Board member (LCB)
* Rick Dunn, Senior Governance & Democracy Advisor RLC.
* Phill Thomass, Chair LCB.
* Nick Chater, Deputy Chair LCB.
* Jennifer Rothwell, Lakes Community Board member.
* Jon Jon Peters, BOP Regional Harbour Master, BOPRC.
* Cr Kevin Waters, BOPRC.
* Debbie Cossar, Manager Governance & Democracy, RLC.

Representatives from the above organisations outlined what they were doing and what needs to be done.

Mr Brightwater commented on the following points:

* Background of identifying Golden Clam (Corbicula fluminea) in the Waikato River.
* It has been located between Bob’s Landing and Wellington Beach.
* Golden Clam is out of East Asia and can be located other areas including North America & Europe.
* It attaches to infrastructure and creates issues around fouling water pipes, irrigation systems & hydro-electricity facilities.
* Biosecurity NZ have surveyed Lake Taupo to the river mouth.
* The Golden Clam has been confirmed in 116km of the Waikato River.
* Surveillance is underway in the Waipa River.
* Golden Clam were identified as an unwanted organism in August 2023.
* Biosecurity Act powers.
* Educating vessel users to check/clean/dry when they leave a water body.
* Ngāti Tarāwhai iwi expressed concerns around Lake Ōkataina and a temporary ban was put in place from 1 October 2023 to 1 November 2023.
* A permanent cleaning facility has now been set up on Te Ngae Road located between the Gull Service Station and Wendy’s.
* Controlled Area Notices (CAN) are now in place on all Te Arawa Lakes. All vessels from the Waikato must be checked/cleaned/dried. The CAN’s provide a legislative tool to enforce certain actions.

Mr Yard commented on the following points:

* The importance of the check/wash/dry requirements for vessels leaving the Waikato area.
* They are tiny organisms and thorough cleaning of vessels is important.
* There is a permanent wash station located at Karapiro.
* Waipa have mobile washing stations available.

Mr Brightwater commented on the following points:

* Work around containing Golden Clam in known areas in the Waikato River.
* Working with organisations e.g. Mighty River Power and Harbour Master.
* Communication plan has been developed to “get the word out” to the community around the importance to check/wash/dry.

Mr Yard explained that no-one worldwide has eradicated Golden Clam and the plan was to contain them in know areas.

Mr Thomass asked what is being done in Rotorua to ensure events are safe.

Mr Corbett explained that an event application is required to be completed which includes biosecurity protocols.

Mr Pitkethley explained that events over the last 6 weeks are showing biosecurity controls are in place and there were a new set of rules that need to be followed.

Mr Bean commented on the following points:

* TALT are working with MPI on policy changes.
* Having the right threshold to issue consents.
* The community are understanding what the concerns are and taking action on controlling the issues. An example was a recent canoe event where biosecurity controls were in place.
* TALT have increased their biosecurity team to 41 members.
* The importance of increasing visibility to the community.
* TALT are working with and receiving support from RLC and BOPRC.
* MPI haven’t gone fast enough or wide enough.
* The need to work collectively towards a sustainable response/approach.

Mr Anaru commented that the temporary closure of Lake Okataina was supported nationally by all biosecurity professionals.

Mr Brightwater confirmed that Controlled Area Notices (CAN) are in place for all 13 lakes in the Rotorua District not just Lake Ōkataina.

Mr Yard explained that there was information available on the MPI website:

mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/exotic pests/Freshwater Golden Clam.

He explained the check/clean/dry requirements.

* CHECK - Check for mud and vegetation.
* CLEAN – Clean the exterior of vessels. Clean life jackets, carpets & interior of vessels with hot water. Freezing items will also be effective.
* DRY – Ensure everything is dry e.g. carpets & wetsuits. Drop outboard motors so they don’t contain any water pockets. Remove the boat bung and drain hull to remove any trapped water.

Mr Corbett explained that there were already rules in place that require vessels moving from one Rotorua lake to another must check/clean/dry e.g. moving from Lake Tarawera to Lake Rotoiti.

Mr Yard explained that there were 50 educational signs already in place. Every boat ramp had signage displayed. A meeting was held last week with RLC and BOPRC to discuss a communication plan and signage.

Mr Thomas asked that large billboard signs be introduced.

Mr Brightwater explained that additional mobile wash stations will be introduced. The wash stations locations are available on Google maps.

Mr Anaru commented on the following points:

* It’s not just about signs, there needs to be a stronger message taken out to lake users.
* There needs to be more lake sampling and boat ramp inspections.
* More resources are required.
* The biosecurity response should be the same as agricultural responses.

Mr Thomas commented that there was a need to resource local communities to monitor, measure and protect lakes. A targeted rate could be introduced to help fund biosecurity measures.

Mr Anaru commented that lakes users could be issued a blue tooth key after they have washed down their vessel which would enable access to lakes in the future.

Mr Corbett commented on the following:

* There needs to be a behavioural change i.e. have you remembered to clean your boat.
* How can we resource to make changes.
* Make sure vessels are cleaned once out of the water.

Mr Thomass asked each organisation “what more do they need to do”?

**Mr Brightwater, MPI.**

* Need to take more guidance from local councils and TALT.
* Let RLC and TALT help lead the response.
* Improved education and a change of attitude.
* Starting to use Facebook as part of their communication plan.

**Mr Corbett, BOPRC.**

* Partial review & strengthen Rule 7 of the Regional Natural Resource Plan (RNRP)
* Funding available for compliance work around Rule 7 RNRP.
* Further surveillance work, Golden Clams are already included in aquatic awareness on Facebook.
* Dive teams are doing surveillance work and taking water samples.

**Mr Anaru, TALT.**

* TALT require long term funding of $2m to help carry out surveillance work.

**Mr [Nick] Chater, Lakes Community Board member.**

* Surveillance works better than signage.
* Iwi may stop access to all lakes.

Mr Thomass asked that BOPRC include Golden Clams in their Pest Management Plan.

Cr Winters explained there was an agenda item included for the BOPRC meeting being held 21 December 2023.

**Mr Pitkethley, RLC.**

* RLC don’t have regulations to act on non-compliance.
* Take responsibility to educate and provide communication to the community i.e. CAN’s cover all the lakes.
* To co-ordinate and provide a strong consistent messaging.

**Mr Brightwater, MPI.**

* Need to listen and work with TALT and RLC.

Mr Thomass commented on the following points;

* All organisations need to work together.
* The community care about the lakes.
* The need to understand the risks.
* Community needs to be proactive.
* Information is available on the RLC website
* Planning for the future – RLC, MPI, Comms, TALT.
* How can funding be made available?
* In Summary 1) Work together 2) Strengthen relationships 3) Establish funding.

Mr Thomass thanked MPI and other attendees for contributing to this agenda item.