

Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

Submission on the proposal to grant a lease, licence and easement concession for a term of 49 years under section 17Q of the Conservation Act 1987 to Westpower Limited to construct and operate a run of the river hydro scheme on the Waitaha River on the West Coast. Waitaha

I oppose the granting of this concession.

I have a 15 year relationship with the Waitaha River. I was on the first descent of Morgan Gorge and the first descent of the Waitaha river from its source. I have been exploring rivers world wide for 25 years and can attest to the world class natural beauty of the Waitaha river and Morgan Gorge. Rivers like the Waitaha are why I have chosen the West Coast as my home.

The issues prompting me to object to this concession are:

- The erosion of the intrinsic value of a wild and free flowing river.
- The precedent this concession will set for the future of New Zealand's Wild and free flowing rivers.
- The Lack of demand for this hydro scheme.
- The existence of other consented and viable hydro schemes in the West Coast Region.
- The loss of a recreational amenity that has international significance.

### **The intrinsic nature of this magnificent wild river in South Westland.**

Conservation Act: **conservation** means the preservation and protection of natural and historic resources for the purpose of maintaining their **intrinsic** values, providing for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment by the public, and safeguarding the options of future generations  
**'Intrinsic value'** is defined in the CGP (Conservation General Policy) as: *"A concept which regards the subject under consideration as having value or worth in its own right independent of any value placed on it by humans."*

DOC acknowledge that the headworks site, the broad scale landscape effects, local scale landscape effect, visual amenity effects, natural character effects are either high or at the least moderate (Concession report: 4.71, 4.99, 4.100, 4.101, 4.102, 4.103)

None of the suggested mitigation can actually mitigate the intrusion of manmade structures and altered river flows on this landscape. This is a truly wild river and its intrinsic character would be destroyed by imposing a hydro scheme on it.

Many people, not only trampers, kayakers and climbers, believe that there is a great need to leave some of nature untamed – leave the unmodified landscape to the native flora and fauna. Knowing that these places still exist is important for people's sense of well-being and the existence of these places goes some way to safeguarding the options of future generations. We do not have to exploit everything just because we can.

Furthermore at a more localised level but which has a huge effect on the overall intrinsic nature of the river the consultant employed by DOC, Jeremy Head states:

*"I agree that the gorge would likely meet the test of an outstanding natural feature within an outstanding natural landscape for the same reasons that Messrs. Bentley and Lister do. It is a dramatic, deeply incised feature that has clearly been shaped through regular high energy river flows. It forms the 'gateway' between the upper and lower catchments, and is currently perceived as an unaltered, very highly natural and wild place. For some, the presence of the proposal could be perceived as curtailing and 'taming' the wild riverine processes.*

*In my view, the driving force (the wild, turbulent river) behind the resulting highly memorable form of the gorge will be altered. There will be a modification to the source-to-sea progression of water within the catchment (even though relatively small) with the proposal in place. And for this reason, in my opinion, the effects on landscape character are greater than 'low'."*

The report states that "Upper Waitaha Catchment would be considered an outstanding natural landscape at both a district and regional scale. Morgan Gorge itself is considered to be an outstanding natural feature within this landscape, due to its exceptional biophysical and perceptual values. The report also notes the hot springs (Waitaha River Springs) at the bottom of the Morgan Gorge and their recognition by the Geopreservation Society." Imposition of manmade structures and alteration of river flows would inevitably destroy this outstanding natural landscape at all levels. Just knowing that it has been altered destroys its intrinsic nature which is part of its outstanding naturalness.

And as quoted in the kayaking section of the report:

*4.402 For many kayakers, retaining a wild and scenic river including the Morgan Gorge is very important even if they do not have the skills and experience to paddle this section of river. For these reasons they have not seen it as appropriate to negotiate a number of no-take or controlled flow days.*

*4.403 Whitewater NZ comments that it is important that wilderness/wild places are not only held in high regard by those who use the place, they are also held in high regard by those that don't use the resource but who know about them, and appreciate them for knowing that they are there.*

These sentiments are true – and not just for kayakers, but they express the relationship people feel with the intrinsic values of the place.

There are no mitigation measures which can overcome the effect on the intrinsic nature of this wild river.

Furthermore this area is classified as stewardship land and has not had its conservation values fully assessed by DOC, to see if it should be classified differently. Any developments in this area before that happens would preclude it from being classified as National Park or Wilderness Area, so it should be assessed for its conservation by DOC, before any development is allowed to happen. Otherwise DOC cannot determine for what purpose the land is held and cannot claim that they are not breaching CA 17 (3) *The Minister shall not grant an application for a concession if the proposed activity is contrary to the provisions of this Act or the purposes for which the land concerned is held.*

The Minister should decline this concession application under CA 17U (1) have regard to: (b) the effects of the activity, structure, or facility:

And 17U (2) (b) there are no adequate methods or no reasonable methods for remedying, avoiding, or mitigating the adverse effects of the activity, structure, or facility.

And 17U (3) The Minister shall not grant an application for a concession if the proposed activity is contrary to the provisions of this Act or the purposes for which the land concerned is held.

### **The precedent this concession will set for the future of New Zealand's Wild and free flowing rivers.**

Although The Morgan Gorge is on Stewardship land, there is no question that the gorge is in a wild and scenic place and has significant value as a natural landscape. It sits within the conservation estate.

Its position within stewardship land would suggest its conservation value is yet to be assessed and its level of protection yet to be allocated. For this to be done fairly, it needs to happen without development and economic pressure. The Waitaha River will never get the protection it deserves if hydro development takes place prior to its Stewardship land status being assessed.

Enabling development on Stewardship land, in pristine wilderness, and on free flowing rivers sets a frightening precedent as to what is available for hydro or economic development.

### **The Lack of demand for this hydro scheme.**

Tony Baldwin's 2015 report on the financial viability of the Waitaha scheme clearly outlines the lack of demand for the power produced by the proposed scheme. Sacrificing an outstanding natural feature in an outstanding natural landscape to supply power that is not needed is illogical and irresponsible.

### **The existence of other consented and viable hydro schemes in the West Coast Region.**

Trust Power has an already consented hydro development proposal on the Arnold River. This will produce more power than the Waitaha proposal and effects an already modified river. In light of this, and other viable alternatives, under section 17U(4)(a) of the Act, the Minister is not allowed to grant concessions for the activity proposed by Westpower in relation to the Waitaha scheme.

**The loss of a recreational amenity that has international significance.**

The New Zealand White Water Guide book describes the Waitaha as 'One of the best runs on the coast and thus one of the best in the country'. Amongst the kayaking fraternity, the Waitaha is regarded as the Mt Cook of NZ rivers. It is an incredibly challenging white water journey regarded internationally as a test piece for kayakers. The hydro scheme will physically remove the kayakers ability to paddle the Morgan Gorge. The mitigation proposed in attempting to maintain kayakers ability to descend Morgan Gorge is highly restrictive and unlikely to align with the numerous factors required for a successful descent.

I want the Department of Conservation to decline this application by Westpower for a concession for a lease, licence and easement in order to have a hydro scheme in the Waitaha.

I wish to be heard at any hearing.

**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, 6 November 2016 8:58 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** Submission on WestPower Ltd's hydro proposal for the Waitaha River

Please do not tamper with the Waitaha River. We have done enough damage to our rivers already. Instead the power companies should invest their resources into wind farms and solar power

Yours Faithfully



**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, 6 November 2016 2:19 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** Submission on proposed DOC concession for Waitaha hydro scheme

Attention: Pauline Adams,

I am writing to submit on the intention to grant a run of the river hydro scheme concession to Westpower Limited for the Morgan Gorge section of the Waitaha.

I am an electrical engineer who has spent most of her career in the power systems industry and a whitewater kayaker. As such I usually have a reasonably balanced view on the requirement for electricity generation vs. the value of free flowing rivers. However, in the case of the Waitaha, I think it would be a irreversible loss to our natural and recreational heritage to swap the untouched nature of this river out for 20 MW.

I have never paddled Morgan gorge and never will but I have spent some time on the rivers of the West Coast and had heard of the Waitaha before there was talk of a hydro scheme there. The rivers that run west off the Southern Alps are a treasure. They are some of the most beautiful places I have been and the fact that you can still paddle them all (if you can get to them and are up for it) makes them especially treasured. The West Coast of New Zealand is an internationally renown destination for challenging and pristine whitewater kayaking.

I believe we would be doing our grand children and great grand children a disservice by modifying this river. It is very unlikely that they will thank us for the hydro scheme while I wouldn't be surprised if they do thank us for saving the river. There are many technological alternatives to generating electricity from that river but only ever one West Coast Waitaha. I have also paddled past the potential dam sites on the Motu and Colorado rivers and been very grateful to the people who fought for those rivers. Those that objected to the damn in the Grand Canyon did so when very few people had experienced the river first hand. They were seen as slightly mad given the opportunity for "development". Very few would question their logic now.

I now live in the North Island where unmodified rivers are nearly extinct. I treasure trips to the South Island where you can still find wilderness and that unique character of West Coast rivers.

In the interests of that that came before and those that come behind us, I hope that the minister sees not just sense and foresight but also compassion, beauty and the human spirit in the context of this big unique wild place we call home.

Regards





**Lucy Croft**

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**From:** >  
**Sent:** Sunday, 6 November 2016 4:15 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** Submission to Save the Waitaha from Damming

Dear Pauline Adams:

This valley and the Morgan Gorge is an important asset to New Zealand and should be preserved for future generations

The Waitaha Valley is classed as an outstanding natural landscape by DoC

The Morgan Gorge is classed as an outstanding natural feature by DoC

There are other viable (and even consented) options for hydro power generation locally-Stockton and Arnold B. These other options are on already heavily modified rivers and do not hold the importance of the Waitaha

It has been proven that the demand for additional power does not exist locally

The only motivation for Westpower to build this is for money, not for local resilience

I AM AGANIST THE PROPOSAL AND DON'T ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN!"

Regards,

I



**West Coast branch of The Green Party  
c/- PO Box 168  
Hokitika 7842**

**Submission on the intention to grant a lease, licence and easement concession for a term of 49 years under section 17Q of the Conservation Act 1987 to Westpower Limited to construct and operate a run of the river hydro scheme on the Waitaha River on the West Coast.**

The West Coast branch of the Green Party has members from Karamea to Haast, and the Waitaha River falls within our area.

We oppose the granting of a concession by the Department of Conservation for a license, lease and easement to Westpower for a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River.

The Green Party would normally support run-of-the river hydro schemes (we supported the Amethyst hydro on the Wanganui tributary) and other hydro schemes such as the Stockton proposal that will also treat acid mine drainage. We are not, in general, anti-development and we are keen to support local cooperative ownership wherever and whenever possible and appropriate. We are not trying to 'lock up' all public conservation stewardship land.

However the environmental cost of the Waitaha proposal on unmodified public conservation land unfortunately far outweighs our support for locally owned development and we have little choice but to vehemently oppose the scheme.

We object to this proposal on four main grounds:

- It would destroy the intrinsic values of this magnificent wild river in South Westland.
- The effects on flora and fauna cannot be mitigated – the suggested measures are weak and impossible to enforce
- Effects on recreational use of the area
- There is no need to create this much additional electricity in South Westland, and there are other viable schemes on the Coast, which are more environmentally acceptable.

#### **Intrinsic values of the Waitaha River**

It has been agreed by all parties that the Morgan Gorge would meet the test of an outstanding natural feature in an outstanding natural landscape. The gorge is a dramatic, deeply incised feature that has clearly been shaped through regular high energy river flows. The alteration of the river flows and the intrusion of man-made structures at the beginning of the gorge would significantly change the character of this place. This would destroy the whole intrinsic nature of the wild river ('Intrinsic value' is defined in the Conservation General Policy as: *"A concept which regards the subject under consideration as having value or worth in its own right independent of any value placed on it by humans."*). It is this intrinsic value, without the need for humans to see or feel it that is so important to many of us.

### **Effects on Flora and Fauna**

The concession report clearly states that many natural values would be affected by this proposal.

- There would be destruction of 3.5 ha of native forest with a reduction in the intactness of the vegetation.
- The removal of vegetation will cause the permanent loss of habitat for lizard species at risk of extinction, including the green and forest gecko. There has been no adequate assessment of whether or not these species are present in the footprint of the development, but it is thought that it is highly likely as the habitat would be ideal.
- There are a high number of threatened native bird species in the area to be disturbed (9 species plus blue duck) including kaka, falcon, kea and grey duck. In particular the effects on who of disturbing the river flow have not been established, and the consequences on the population in the greater area have not been established. There are also western weka recorded in the catchment, which are genetically distinct from other populations of weka north of the Waitaha catchment, and the effect on these has not been determined. The possible mitigation measures suggested are not sufficient to protect our threatened bird species.
- The long tailed bat is present within the footprint. The clearance of habitat and tree felling will result in loss of both their breeding and feeding habitat –this cannot be mitigated.

### **Effects on Recreation**

This scheme would completely change the remote-like characteristics of the area – any building or structure changes the nature of the place – it would no longer be a remote setting. This catchment and its associated tracks and huts are treasured by many, including those who will never get there. Ivory Lake hut at the head of the catchment is considered to be one of the best destinations for trampers in the country.

It is obvious from the report that the kayakers feel that a hydro scheme would destroy the intrinsic nature of this white water challenge, and indeed the proposed mitigation suggested by Westpower is totally inadequate.

*From the concessions report: 4.430 The Department considers that both national and international visitors, and in particularly kayakers, regardless of whether or not they have the ability to paddle the Morgan Gorge, highly value and appreciate the intrinsic worth of retaining rivers on the West Coast and around the world that can flow uninterrupted and are free of hydro schemes and their associated structures.*

No amount of mitigation can change this sentiment.

The suggested mitigation for kayakers specifically does not mitigate the effect on the recreational values of the Gorge, and does nothing for the trampers in the area.

### **Other potential power schemes on the West Coast.**

- The expanded hydro scheme on the Arnold River has been fully consented, and the Arnold is already a heavily modified river

- There is a proposed hydro scheme at Stockton plateau, which has the added benefit of using and disposing the acid mine drainage. This scheme is now being progressed.
- Westpower themselves state that their Amethyst hydro scheme can supply the entire South Westland load, so a new hydro scheme in this area is not actually needed. If more power is needed, it is needed further up the Coast, near the population centres.

**We ask DOC to reject this application by Westpower as it contravenes the following parts of the Conservation Act and does not comply with the West Coast Conservation Management Strategy. In particular it contravenes:**

- Section 25 of the Conservation Act 1987 (CA) on the basis that the natural and historic resources of the stewardship land would not be protected.
- Section 3.3.4.3 of the West Coast CMS as the geodiversity and landscapes would not be protected from adverse effects of human use or management. Also Section 3.7.2 as the proposal does not avoid adverse effects on the beds of river or lakes.
- Section 17U (2) (b) of the CA on the basis that there are no adequate methods or no reasonable methods for remedying, avoiding or mitigating all the significant adverse effects of the activity on Natural Character and Recreational values.
- Section 17(U) (3) of the CA on the basis that some aspects of the proposed hydro scheme are contrary to the purposes for which the land is held
- Section 17W(1) of the CA on the basis that the application is inconsistent with parts of the Conservation General Policy and the West Coast CMS.

**We wish to be heard at any hearing.**

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**Co-convenor West Coast branch of The Green Party.**



**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, 7 November 2016 10:57 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** Submission

I am opposed to the application by Westpower Limited for a Lease, Easement and License for a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River.

I request that the Minister of Conservation decline the Application.

I oppose the application because I do not think the proposal will meet the purpose of the Conservation Act and Imposing a hydro scheme on public conservation land is totally inappropriate.

Proceeding with this proposal will have a detrimental impact on the high natural values of this wild river destroying native flora and fauna and threatening the extinction of lizards like the green and forest gecko and our native bird species including the Kaka, Falcon and Whio.

Westpower notes that western weka are recorded in the catchment, these birds are genetically distinct from other populations of weka north of the Waitaha catchment and there is insufficient information about the impacts of the resident Whio population.

There can be no confidence that Westpower is able to avoid, remedy or mitigate impacts on this iconic species, including the impacts of construction and the dewatering of the Morgan Gorge. In fact there is no mitigation measures that can compensate for the change from an outstanding wild and remote experience in the upper Waitaha and Morgan Gorge considered one of the most spectacular gorges in the country, to what would become an 'industrialised' environment as a result of the reduced river flow, weir and associated infrastructure.

This area is highly valued for its sense of remoteness by trampers and hunters alike and is considered to be of international significance for kayakers and although there are other alternatives for hydro generation on the West Coast.

I'd like bring to your attention Consents have been issued for hydro schemes on the Arnold River and at Stockton proving there is no case for further hydro generation that justifies the destruction of such a wild and special place.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission, as New Zealander's we must work together to for the best environmental and recreational outcomes for us all.

I do NOT wish to be heard.





**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, 7 November 2016 2:31 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Cc:** niconservation+waitaha@rivers.org.nz  
**Subject:** Submission on WestPower Ltd's hydro proposal for the Waitaha River

Hi There

I don't understand why this rivers needs to be dammed?

Does the west coast not have enough electricity? The West coast population is not growing - with demands by mining companies lowering the demand for energy must also lower??

It is shortsighted to put a dam on the beautiful river. As a user of rivers for over 25 years I appreciate the beauty of and experience can only being had by travelling down a river. I have paddled many of the rivers on the west coast and do not support the damming of this river. Where will the damming stop?

Rivers like this need to be protected for generations to come.

Please do not dam



**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** monday, 7 November 2016 4:12 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Attention: Pauline Adams

I am a trumper, writer and photographer from Wellington, and I lived on the West Coast for a year in 1992-93, and came to love its dense forests, wild rivers and untamed backcountry. I've since made many trips to the West Coast, tramping and climbing, and altogether spent over 400 days in the backcountry. I've been up all of the West Coast's major rivers between the Heaphy in the north and the Arawhata in the south, except the Cook, Mahitahi, Makawhio and Moeraki. Without doubt, the most impressive schist gorges I've seen are those of the Morgan Gorge, in the Waitaha.

Although I don't have the kayaking skills to paddle the gorge at river level, I've tramped above the gorge and peered down into its formidable depths. This was the the end of a particularly arduous crossing I made of the Southern Alps, and it was humbling and frightening to pear down into a place of such wildness and Inaccessibility.

It's a place of wild, fierce beauty, a place that awes with the particular and unsurpassed way water has worked its artistry over eons. Schist to me is one of the most wonderful types of rock, with its white veins, goldy colourations and the curious ways it splits and stacks. It would be an absolute travesty if any sort of human development altered this wild river. I am absolutely opposed to any sort of hyrdo-electric development on the Morgan Gorge or any other part of the Waitaha.

On the West Coast there are many beautiful and wild rivers, but to my my mind the Waltaha is among the most precious. It is also an extraordinary place for those few kayakers who have the skills to tackle it, and rates internationally for its whitewater values. Please do not allow damming or any sort of hydro development on this river.

Yours faithfully, Shaun Barnett

Yours,



Submission on the proposed Waitaha Hydro Scheme by Westpower under Section 17U of the Conservation Act 1987

TO: Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

Attention: Pauline Adams, [permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)

SUBMITTER:

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**Introduction**

I am the Director of Experiential Learning at Tai Poutini Polytechnic in Greymouth, have a Master's Degree in Leadership and have been an educator in the outdoors for over 25 years, working on all seven continents in the process.

The Waitaha River represents the very thing drives motivation to learn – it is an aspirational goal, not simply to paddle down, but even to access. Its very existence is critical to our collective identity as New Zealanders, a people more than almost any others in the world, who are connected so overtly to our wild places.

One has to ask the question of how history will judge the decision by the Department of Conservation to allow this kind of development even in its initial stages. A decision that is not supported by facts, nor trends, nor common sense. If, as some believe, the Department makes a decision like this in order to gauge public opinion by the strength of the response, then the department needs to reassess this approach, not least because of its inherent riskiness but also the dramatic and irreversible consequences.

**Submission**

Westpower is seeking concessions in the form of leases, licenses and easements, and therefore under Part 3B of the Act the Minister must be satisfied the proposed activities are both appropriate and lawful.

Under Section 17 S (2) of the Conservation Act the minister is required to consider the financial viability of the proposal. Reservations about financial viability were one of five reasons given by the Minister for declining the Fiordland Monorail application in 2014.

The financial underpinning of the Westpower Waitaha Hydro Project appears to be based on predictions of power demand that are wildly at odds with many other forecasts (See Baldwin Report DOCCM 234-5375, p 22, DOC Concession Officers Report, Section 2.14), therefore casting what can only be considered significant doubt upon the financial model used by Westpower.

Given this significant doubt, it would be inappropriate in terms of 17S (2) of the Act to impose adverse effects on conservation values\* in authorising such a project. To authorise a non-viable business with such effects would be inconsistent with the Act's purpose and the Minister would therefore be at error.

Under Section 17 U (4) (a) of the Conservation Act, the Minister is not able to grant a concession when they are satisfied the activity could reasonably be undertaken in another location that is outside the conservation area in question, or where the potential adverse effects would be significantly less.

Westpower's Waitaha application fails to address alternatives to the Waitaha Scheme which include;

1. Arnold River hydro scheme
2. Stockton mine and Stockton plateau hydro schemes

The suitability of these schemes as alternatives is discussed at length in Tony Baldwin's Report (DOCCM 234-5375, Section 13, DOC Concession Officers Report, 2.14). Each of these schemes is already fully consented and under section 17 U (4) (a) of the Act, the Minister is therefore not allowed to grant concessions for the activity proposed by Westpower in relation to the Waitaha scheme.

Therefore;

I oppose and object to the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.

I request that the intention to grant be reversed and that the concession not be granted on the basis of the discussion above.

I wish to be heard in support of this submission.

Date

7/11/16

\* "promote the preservation and protection of natural and historic resources for the purpose of maintaining their intrinsic values, providing for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment by the public, and safeguarding the options of future generations."

Submission on the proposed Waitaha Hydro Scheme by Westpower under Section 17U of the Conservation Act 1987

TO: Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

Attention: Pauline Adams, [permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)

SUBMITTER:

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Roroni or

Introduction

*I have lived on the West Coast for 11 years now and from a young age I have been passionate about kayaking and the outdoors. Recently 28/09/15 I went and visited Morgans gorge and got to truly appreciate and admire the power and beauty of the untouched land. This was a very surreal moment, during this time I made it part of my bucket list that I will get to paddle this gorge one day and that is the plan but with this dam proposal not only is it hindering my ability to do this but others as well.*

Submission

Westpower is seeking concessions in the form of leases, licenses and easements, and therefore under Part 3B of the Act the Minister must be satisfied the proposed activities are both appropriate and lawful.

Under Section 17 S (2) of the Conservation Act the minister is required to consider the financial viability of the proposal. Reservations about financial viability were one of five reasons given by the Minister for declining the Fiordland Monorail application in 2014.

The financial underpinning of the Westpower Waitaha Hydro Project appears to be based on predictions of power demand that are wildly at odds with many other forecasts (See Baldwin Report DOCCM 234-5375, p 22, DOC Concession Officers Report, Section 2.14), therefore casting what can only be considered significant doubt upon the financial model used by Westpower.

Given this significant doubt, it would be inappropriate in terms of 17S (2) of the Act to impose adverse effects on conservation values\* in authorising such a project. To authorise a non-viable business with such effects would be inconsistent with the Act's purpose and the Minister would therefore be at error.

**Under Section 17 U (4) (a) of the Conservation Act**, the Minister is not able to grant a concession when they are satisfied the activity could reasonably be undertaken in another location that is outside the conservation area in question, or where the potential adverse effects would be significantly less.

Westpower's Waitaha application fails to address alternatives to the Waitaha Scheme which include;

1. Arnold River hydro scheme
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**SUBMISSION:**

**I oppose and object to the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.**

**I request that the Intention to grant be reversed and that the concession not be granted on the basis of the discussion above.**

**I wish to be heard in support of this submission.**

**07/11/2016**

**Links**

[Department of Conservation Concession Officers Report](#)

[Tony Baldwin Report](#)

[Conservation Act 1987 \(Refer Part 3B, Section 17 S-U\)](#)



\* "promote the preservation and protection of natural and historic resources for the purpose of maintaining their intrinsic values, providing for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment by the public, and safeguarding the options of future generations."

#### Section 17S(2)

Where an applicant applies for—

- (a) a lease; or
- (b) a *profit à prendre* or a licence granting an interest in land; or
- (c) an easement;—

the applicant, in addition to supplying the information required by subsection (1), shall supply reasons for the request and sufficient information to satisfy the Minister, in terms of section 17U, that it is both appropriate to grant the lease, *profit à prendre*, licence, or easement and lawful to grant it.

#### Section 17U(4)(a)

The Minister shall not grant any application for a concession to build a structure or facility, or to extend or add to an existing structure or facility, where he or she is satisfied that the activity—

- (a) could reasonably be undertaken in another location that—
  - (i) is outside the conservation area to which the application relates; or
  - (ii) is in another conservation area or in another part of the conservation area to which the application relates, where the potential adverse effects would be significantly less; or



**Lucy Croft**

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Sent:** Monday, 7 November 2016 8:52 p.m. com  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Submission on Waitaha River application by Westpower Attention: Pauline Adams

I am opposed to the application by Westpower Limited for a Lease, Easement and License for a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River.

I request that the Minister of Conservation decline the Application.

I oppose the application because: The proposal does not meet the purpose of the Conservation Act.

The proposal will have an irrevocable impact on the high natural values of this wild river. The mitigation proposed by Westpower will not mitigate the impacts of the intrusion of manmade structures and altered river flows on this landscape.

This is a truly wild river and its intrinsic character that includes the native flora and fauna would be permanently destroyed by imposing a hydro scheme on public conservation land.

The Impacts on these values include:

The intrinsic nature of the magnificent undisturbed river in South Westland.  
 The Waitaha is an unobstructed wild river.

There is wide agreement that it is an outstanding natural landscape.

The Morgan Gorge is an outstanding natural feature and one of the most spectacular gorges in the country.

The construction of a weir and associated infrastructure close to where the Waitaha enters the gorge will have an entirely unacceptable and inappropriate impact on the overwhelming naturalness of this special place.

The upper catchment of the Waitaha It is highly valued for its sense of remoteness by trampers and hunters alike and is considered to be of international significance for kayakers.

There is no mitigation measures that can compensate for the change from an outstanding wild and remote experience in the upper Waitaha to what will be become a significantly modified and 'industrialised' environment as a result of the reduced river flow, weir and associated infrastructure.

The values of the Waitaha are important in and of itself.

Effects on significant flora and fauna habitat:

The permanent loss of 3.5 ha of native forest with a reduction in the intactness of the vegetation.

The removal of vegetation as a result of the proposal will cause the permanent loss of habitat for of lizard species at risk of extinction, including the green and forest gecko.

Westpower has not adequately assessed the presence of these highly threatened species and have not given any assurance that the impacts on them can be properly avoided or mitigated.

The proposal will result in the destruction of these nationally important species, any loss therefore is significant. Westpower has identified 27 native bird species with the hydro footprint, including a number of threatened native bird species. These include kaka, falcon and whio.

Westpower notes that western weka are recorded in the catchment. Western weka are genetically distinct from other populations of weka north of the Waitaha catchment. There is insufficient information about the impacts of the resident whio population, including the importance of the Morgan Gorge to them. There can be no confidence that Westpower is able to avoid, remedy or mitigate impacts on this iconic species, including the impacts of construction and the dewatering of the Morgan Gorge.

The long tailed bat is present within the footprint. The clearance of habitat and tree felling will result in loss of both their breeding and feeding habitat and has the potential to cause the death of bats. This is an entirely unacceptable and inappropriate risk and one that cannot be adequately mitigated for.

Furthermore, there are already other alternatives for hydro generation on the West Coast. There are already consented proposals for hydro including the schemes on the Arnold River and at Stockton. There is no case for further hydro generation that justifies the destruction of such a wild and special place.

I note the findings of the Baldwin report to the Minister:

#### 1.2 Key conclusions

Based on the analysis in this report:

☒ Westpower's reasons for the proposed Waitaha scheme are not supported by the evidence or are not relevant under Part 3B of the Act. Individually or together, Westpower's reasons do not therefore provide sufficient reason to conclude that it would be appropriate in terms of section 17S(2) of the Act to authorise an activity in a conservation area that would impose adverse effects.

☒ The Waitaha scheme is not likely to be financially viable in the reasonably foreseeable future.

It would therefore not seem to be "appropriate" in terms of 17S(2) of the Act to authorise such a business to impose adverse effects in a conservation area.

Financial viability of Waitaha hydro proposal, April 2015 Baldwin Consulting Page 14 of 216 Draft ☒ There is a wide range of alternative locations within the relevant time-frame at which the activity in question could be reasonably undertaken outside the relevant conservation area.

Under section 17U(4)(a) of the Act, the Minister is therefore not allowed to grant concessions for the activity proposed by Westpower in relation to the Waitaha scheme.

Yours,

**Lucy Croft**

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, 7 November 2016 9:00 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** Waitaha River

Dear Pauline Adams,

I should like to make a submission to the

Director- General of Department of Conservation Private Bag 701  
Hokitika7842

objecting to the granting of a concession to Westpower Limited to construct a run of the river hydro scheme on the Waitaha River on the West Coast.

I live close to the Waitaki River and am constantly reminded of the devastation that can be wrecked on the environment when Corporations are given license to construct irreversible changes to rivers and landscape.

It is time we listened to the Commissioner for the Environment and realised there are few enough wild rivers and landscapes left in the world. We must preserve what we have at all costs. The intrinsic value is beyond estimation and no matter how particular we are to itemise the individual components of the Waitaha river system its value lies in its holistic value as a total river environment from mountains to sea. We cannot replace the gorge and it is so easy to destroy. A change in valuing rivers and landscapes as resources to be exploited and instead a recognition that we are all part of a community that needs mutual respect is essential.

I would like to be heard.

Sincerely,



Submission on the proposal to grant a lease, licence and easement concession for a term of 49 years under section 17Q of the Conservation Act 1987 to Westpower Limited to construct and operate a run of the river hydro scheme on the Waitaha River on the West Coast. Waitaha

I oppose the granting of this concession.

I have lived on the West Coast for 24 years and came here originally because of the amazing conservation land – the mountains, rivers and bush. I fully support the move away from energy production using fossil fuels towards the use of renewable power, but the effects of the environment have to be considered before any energy production scheme is allowed.

There are 4 main issues to be considered

- The intrinsic nature of this magnificent undisturbed river in South Westland.
- Effects on flora and fauna: the mitigation measures are weak and impossible to enforce
- Effects on recreational use of this area
- There is no need to create this much new power in South Westland, and there are other viable schemes in the area.

### **The intrinsic nature of this magnificent wild river in South Westland.**

Conservation Act: conservation means the preservation and protection of natural and historic resources for the purpose of maintaining their **Intrinsic** values, providing for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment by the public, and safeguarding the options of future generations

'Intrinsic value' is defined in the CGP (Conservation General Policy) as: *"A concept which regards the subject under consideration as having value or worth in its own right independent of any value placed on it by humans."*

DOC acknowledge that the headworks site, the broad scale landscape effects, local scale landscape effect, visual amenity effects, natural character effects are either high or at the least moderate (Concession report: 4.71, 4.99, 4.100, 4.101, 4.102, 4.103)

None of the suggested mitigation can actually mitigate the intrusion of manmade structures and altered river flows on this landscape. This is a truly wild river and its intrinsic character would be destroyed by imposing a hydro scheme on it. Many people, not only trampers, kayakers and climbers, believe that there is a great need to leave some of nature untamed – leave the unmodified landscape to the native flora and fauna. Knowing that these places still exist is important for people's sense of well-being and the existence of these places goes some way to safeguarding the options of future generations. We do not have to exploit everything just because we can.

Furthermore at a more localised level but which has a huge effect on the overall intrinsic nature of the river the consultant employed by DOC, Jeremy Head states:

*"I agree that the gorge would likely meet the test of an outstanding natural feature within an outstanding natural landscape for the same reasons that Messrs. Bentley and Lister do. It is a dramatic, deeply incised feature that has clearly been shaped through regular high energy river flows. It forms the 'gateway' between the upper and lower catchments, and is currently perceived as an unaltered, very highly natural and wild place. For some, the presence of the proposal could be perceived as curtailing and 'taming' the wild riverine processes.*

*In my view, the driving force (the wild, turbulent river) behind the resulting highly memorable form of the gorge will be altered. There will be a modification to the source-to-sea progression of water within the catchment (even though relatively small) with the proposal in place. And for this reason, in my opinion, the effects on landscape character are greater than 'low'."*

The report states that "Upper Waitaha Catchment would be considered an outstanding natural landscape at both a district and regional scale. Morgan Gorge itself is considered to be an outstanding natural feature within this landscape, due to its exceptional biophysical and perceptual values. The report also notes the hot springs (Waitaha River Springs) at the bottom of the Morgan Gorge and their recognition by the Geopreservation Society." Imposition of manmade structures and alteration of river flows would inevitably destroy this outstanding natural landscape at all levels. Just knowing that it has been altered destroys its intrinsic nature which is part of its outstanding naturalness.

And as quoted in the kayaking section of the report:

*4.402 For many kayakers, retaining a wild and scenic river including the Morgan Gorge is very important even if they do not have the skills and experience to paddle this section of river. For these reasons they have not seen it as appropriate to negotiate a number of no-take or controlled flow days.*

*4.403 Whitewater NZ comments that it is important that wilderness/wild places are not only held in high regard by those who use the place, they are also held in high regard by those that don't use the resource but who know about them, and appreciate them for knowing that they are there.*

These sentiments are true – and not just for kayakers, but they express the relationship people feel with the intrinsic values of the place.

There are no mitigation measures which can overcome the effect on the intrinsic nature of this wild river.

Furthermore this area is classified as stewardship land and has not had its conservation values fully assessed by DOC, to see if it should be classified differently. Any developments in this area before that happens would preclude it from being classified as National Park or Wilderness Area, so it should be assessed for its conservation by DOC, before any development is allowed to happen. Otherwise DOC cannot determine for what purpose the land is held and cannot claim that they are not breaching CA 17 (3) *The Minister shall not grant an application for a concession if the proposed activity is contrary to the provisions of this Act or the purposes for which the land concerned is held.*

The Minister should decline this concession application under CA 17U (1) have regard to: (b) the effects of the activity, structure, or facility:



And 17U (2) (b) there are no adequate methods or no reasonable methods for remedying, avoiding, or mitigating the adverse effects of the activity, structure, or facility.

And 17U (3) The Minister shall not grant an application for a concession if the proposed activity is contrary to the provisions of this Act or the purposes for which the land concerned is held.

### Effects on flora and fauna

There would be a permanent loss of 3.5 ha of native forest with a reduction in the intactness of the vegetation. This cannot be avoided, remedied or mitigated. Jane Marshall states: *"I agree with the conclusion of ecology report that the project will not have a major impact on the values identified but it will result in an overall loss of conservation value if no compensation is provided."* She admits that there is a loss in conservation values – compensation does not change the fact that there is a loss in conservation values – it just compensates for it. Therefore the application should be declined under CA 17U (2) (b) as there is no reasonable methods for remedying, avoiding or mitigating the loss of conservation values.

There are 9 threatened bird species plus blue duck in the "envelope" (the area that Westpower wants permission to disturb), including critically endangered long-tailed bat and grey duck, nationally endangered kea and nationally vulnerable kaka and falcon. Of note is the fact that there are a relatively high number of bat records within and around the area affected by the 'envelope'.

Even though Westpower misrepresented the situation by suggesting there were only a low number of species present, the Department then suggests there are adequate mitigation measures to be taken to avoid loss of breeding and feeding habitat – this avoidance by selective logging will still have an overall effect on the ecosystem that these threatened bird and bats live in – the Department cannot be certain of the outcomes to these endangered species. Predator pressure and riparian disturbance have not been avoided, mitigated or remedied by the suggested conditions

Furthermore on just the blue ducks – Andrew Grant of DOC states:

- *"various catchments maybe integral in the meta population but this relationships and the various contributions or dependencies of the other catchments is not well understood. Is the influence of this hydro development wider than just the Waitaha catchment?"*
- *I am not convinced that the reach where water flow will be reduced, the Morgan Gorge, is not important for blue duck and I feel more work is necessary to determine the role this areas plays for the Waitaha blue duck population and the wider blue duck meta population."*

These points are not addressed in the DOC officers report.

The weir has to be designed for both blue duckling and koaro whitebait (but no other fish) movement – none of this is proven technology. The fallback for blue duck are "(a) undertake a Whio Operation Nest Egg operation as in condition 18.7; or (b) fund a captive bred blue duck programme; or (c) extend the predator control commitments." All these methods are normally used to boost a population, not stop it being decimated by development.

Colin O'Donnell states: *"The survey area is considered to contain areas of significant habitat for indigenous fauna based on assessment of guidelines/criteria for significance set out in the West Coast Regional Policy Statement 2000 (the RPS) (West Coast Regional Council 2000) and the Westland District Plan 2002 (the WDP) (Westland District Council 2002). The survey area has high natural heritage values based on assessment criteria in the West Coast Conservation Management Strategy 2010-2020 (the CMS) (Department of Conservation 2010). The RPS and WDP criteria are for the purposes of Section 6(c) of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), whilst the CMS criteria are for the purposes of integrated conservation management of natural and historic resources under the Conservation Act 1987."* (Wildlife Surveys Ltd 2014)."

And further *" In the context of Natural Heritage policies of the CMS, and as stated in the Wildlife Surveys Ltd (2014) report, the site triggers significance under all the Representativeness, Diversity, Intactness, Viability, Threatened Species and Habitat and Taonga species and Habitat criteria.*

So the area has high conservation and high biodiversity values according to various different classifications and the disturbance to this site cannot be mitigated by any provisions during construction or operation – these values will be destroyed.

Therefore the concession should not be granted under CA 17U (2)(b) as the effects cannot be avoided, mitigated or remedied. It would also fail to satisfy CMS Section 3.3 Natural Heritage Conservation, where the aim is to prevent further loss of indigenous biodiversity by removing as many human-induced disturbances as possible. It would also not comply with CMS Section 3.3.3.5 Threatened Species Management

4.564 Objective 1 "To prevent further extinctions or range contractions of indigenous species found on the West Coast Te Tai o Poutini."

And Objective 2 "To ensure, where practicable, that representative populations of all indigenous species have long-term security in predominantly natural habitats within their natural range."

It would also not comply with CMS Section 3.3.3.2 Maintenance and Restoration of the Indigenous Natural Character of Ecosystems

4.551 (a) prevent the loss of indigenous species and the full range of their habitats and ecosystems;

And so it should be rejected under CA Section 17W(1) on the basis that the application is inconsistent with parts of the Conservation General Policy and the West Coast CMS.

## **Lizards**

The report notes how difficult it is to find lizards (4.170) but DOC clearly believe that lizards are present. Some of these species are At Risk of extinction, and the presence of some of these species would be of high conservation value (4.174, 4.178) – but of course they don't know which are present, and the Department consider that any loss would be considered nationally significant.

*"4.180 No other proposal is offered as avoidance, remediation, or mitigation for the loss of habitat and probable loss of individuals. The Department considers that there would be localised negative effects through loss of individuals and permanent loss of potential habitat, and there could be significant national effects. Either way biodiversity values on public conservation lands would be reduced. "*

The report then gives various methods of trying to "mitigate" the destruction of the habitat of the lizards ....

*"4.182 Adams (2014) states that the cryptic nature of lizards makes any search difficult, and from experience of lizard surveys on the West Coast, "searches are even more difficult there". Survey must be done by highly skilled herpetologist, ideally assisted with specially trained detection dogs. Even under ideal conditions there is a likelihood of missing/ detecting some/many species and detecting even abundant species would require significant effort over time. "*

Then there are involved instructions about lizard salvage, release of lizards and reporting of these efforts.

The reality is that if no lizards were found by searchers over 10 days originally, Westpower will conveniently "not" find any lizards in the area, which will significantly reduce the time and effort they have to invest in this mitigation. The description of the mitigation shows that it is untenable and will not work – the lizard salvage might work if that was the only intention of the operator (ie someone undertaking a scientific study of lizards), but actually the operator wants to build a hydro scheme not look for lizards.

Therefore this hydro must be declined pursuant to 17U(2)(a) of the CA 1987 a) on the basis that the information available is insufficient or inadequate to fully assess the effects. b) Section 17U (2) (b) of the Conservation Act 1987 on the basis that there are no adequate methods or no reasonable methods for remedying, avoiding or mitigating all the significant adverse effects of the activity on Natural Character and Recreational values.

It also does not comply with the provisions within the CMS that relate to the security of indigenous species.

#### **Aquatic Ecology/Benthic Communities and Fish**

Numerous monitoring programmes are suggested as part of the consent, all of these state that if adverse effects on various indicators are found (fish and invertebrate stranding in various areas, build-up of gravel, sedimentation release etc), then appropriate mitigation must be undertaken. There is no sense of how this mitigation will be developed for different scenarios and one can assume that Westpower will not down tools to wait to see how to mitigate these effects! There are not enough tangible methods for much of the mitigation – its more "we'll wait and see what happens" and then develop a plan – this is unrealistic. This is a hydro scheme designed to make money for a company – they have to work efficiently and quickly or it will be a failure for them.

Both the Department and Westpower's consultant agree that there is a level of uncertainty that remains regarding the long term effects of the Scheme on the koaro population upstream of Morgan Gorge and 'At Risk' native fish in the abstraction reach. Given the paucity of real data about the effect of the proposed mitigation methods the information is inadequate to assess the effects so that the proposed hydro scheme should be declined pursuant to 17U(2)(a) of the Conservation Act 1987.

## **Effect on recreation**

This scheme would completely change the remote-like characteristics of the area – any building or structure changes the nature of the place – it would no longer be a remote setting. Even though it is perceived as remote it is still accessible for many as far as Kiwi Flat hut, - the feeling of being in a back country wilderness experience within a few hours walk of SH6 is becoming a rare possibility. Even with a relocated track, the intake and associated works would be obvious from Kiwi Flat – it completely changes the nature of this area. From Kiwi Flat there is access to a vast area with challenging tracks and some huts. The presence of a hydro scheme, with the intake just below Kiwi Flat hut would certainly change the perception of this area, and detract from the remote challenging aspect so treasured by many (not only those with the skills to tramp in this area but also to many for whom Ivory Lake hut is just a dream).

It is obvious from the report that the kayakers feel that a hydro scheme would destroy the intrinsic nature of this white water challenge, and indeed the proposed mitigation suggested by Westpower seems pathetic. (4.431)

*4.430 The Department considers that both national and international visitors, and in particularly kayakers, regardless of whether or not they have the ability to paddle the Morgan Gorge, highly value and appreciate the intrinsic worth of retaining rivers on the West Coast and around the world that can flow uninterrupted and are free of hydro schemes and their associated structures.*

No amount of mitigation can change this sentiment.

The suggested mitigation for kayakers specifically does not mitigate the effect on the recreational values of the Gorge, and does nothing for the trampers in the area.

So the proposal should be declined under:

Section 17U (2) (b) of the Conservation Act 1987 on the basis that there are no adequate methods or no reasonable methods for remedying, avoiding or mitigating all the significant adverse effects of the activity on Natural Character and Recreational values.

And Section 17(U) (3) on the basis that some aspects of the proposed hydro scheme are contrary to the purposes for which the land is held.

## **Is this hydro needed in this area?**

*4.508 The Department considers that Westpower has carried out extensive investigation of a number of alternatives sites both outside of the Waitaha Forest Conservation Area and in other conservation areas on the West Coast that were within the Westpower distribution area (from Lyell in the North to Paringa in South Westland.)*

Why did Westpower not investigate the potential of hydro power areas that are on not public conservation land? They have not proven that they could not undertake this hydro in another area and so the proposal should be declined under CA Section 17U (4) relating to alternative sites. And also as it contravenes CGP Policy 11.3 (a) Utilities may be provided for on public conservation lands

and waters where they cannot be reasonably located outside public conservation lands and waters, or if specifically provided for as a purpose for which the place is held.

Westpower already have a substantial hydro scheme at Amethyst producing 45 GWh of energy per annum. From their website: *"significantly reducing losses in transporting electricity to the West Coast. Additionally, the station is able to run isolated from the grid to supply the entire South Westland load, greatly improving the security of supply to South Westland."*

Does Westland need all this extra power as the Amethyst can supply all the energy needs of South Westland? The proposed Trustpower scheme at the Arnold River make far more sense, this is a heavily modified river with a hydro power scheme already on it and Trustpower have already gained resource consent to enlarge the current hydro scheme on the river.

CGP states in Policy 11.3- Utilities (d) Utilities should, wherever possible, be located in, or added to, an existing structure or facility and use existing access options.

There is also the proposed hydro scheme using acid mine drainage off the Stockton Plateau, which has recently been revived and has the added benefit of treating acid mine drainage.

Both the Arnold and the Stockton schemes are environmentally more responsible, and are closer to centres of population where the energy is needed, and do not contravene CGP Policy 11.3.

I want the Department of Conservation to decline this application by Westpower for a concession for a lease, licence and easement in order to have a hydro scheme in the Waitaha.

I wish to be heard at any hearing.



# SUBMISSION TO MINISTER OF CONSERVATION (HON M BARRY)

**IN THE MATTER** of the proposed concession by DOC to grant Westpower Ltd. approval to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.

## 1 TABLE OF CONTENTS

My submission is structured as follows:

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- 5 Alignment with Legislation and Authority to Grant Consent ..... 3
- 6 Conclusion ..... 4

## 2 INTRODUCTION AND WHO I AM

1 I am a qualified Landscape Architect and have been in practice as a landscape architect and environmental designer for approximately thirty years. I am presently self-employed as a consulting Landscape Architect based in Wanaka. I hold a Bachelors Degree in Botany from the University of Canterbury and a Post Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture from Lincoln University. I am a past Associate Member and past Registered Member of New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects.

2 I have been professionally involved with urban, peri-urban, rural and natural area landscape design and planning projects throughout New Zealand. I have comprehensive work experience with Local Authorities, a Regional Council and Government Departments including; Invercargill City Council, Waikato Valley Authority, the Department of Conservation and Christchurch City Council. I have worked in private practice and have considerable expertise in the fields of landscape design and planning and ecological protection, enhancement and restoration.

- 3 I have prepared and presented evidence at numerous local authority hearings. I have prepared and presented Landscape Evidence at QLDC hearings and in the Environment Court in a number of cases involving developments on Outstanding Natural Features (ONF) and in Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONL) within the Wakatipu and Upper Clutha basins.
- 4 While working for Morgan and Pollard in Queenstown I prepared the Landscape Peer Review of the Monorail proposal in South Westland. My report was on behalf of Wildlands Consultants for the Southland Conservancy of DOC. While the applicants' landscape consultants, (Boffa Miskel Ltd and their peer reviewer from Auckland), supported the proposal I concluded that adverse effects on natural and scenic values would have been significant. At the final hurdle this application was turned down by the Minister of Conservation.
- 5 I am an experienced trapper and mountaineer and have over the last forty years visited most of the wild and scenic catchments throughout the west coast. I have hiked up and down many of the regions major rivers and their sub-catchments including but not limited to the Taramakau, Styx, Hokitika, Whitcombe, Waitaha, Perth, Wanganui, Copland, Otoko and Paringa.
- 6 I am familiar with the Waitaha River catchment and have visited the upper Waitaha, including Ivory Lake and the County River on a number of occasions. I have walked down the Waitaha River, during normal and flood flows and have been 'blown away' by the grandeur of the river gorge and the wild and scenic values of the outstanding natural landscape. During my forays into and out of catchment I have been the awed by the entrance to top of the Morgan Gorge. On one particularly memorable solo journey out of the catchment I passed the entrance to the Morgan Gorge during a storm and I felt dwarfed and overwhelmed by the power of this wild and scenic river. As the river roared towards the dark cleft, the rain pelted down and the forest enclosed and enveloped this outstanding natural feature. The hand of 'man' was absent and the depth and vividness of my remote experience has stayed with me for over 30 years.
- 7 I am an experienced kayaker and have paddled a number of wild and scenic rivers throughout NZ. These include the Motu, Mohaka, Tongariro, Mokau, Clarence, and sections of the Buller, Wairau, Shotover, Karawau, Clutha, Waiau, Hollyford and other smaller rivers. I am familiar with the wild and scenic values kayakers seek out and cherish. Sadly my skills are insufficient for me to even contemplate entering the Morgan Gorge, but I am envious of and I have great respect for those who have paddled the Waitaha and the Morgan Gorge.

### 3 REVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL

- 8 I have read the DOC Notified Concession Officers Report (WC-34113-OTH. File PAC-11.04.115). I have also read a number of related reports prepared for DOC, including but not limited to Landscape Peer Review by Landscape Architect Jeremy Head. I have read independent reports by Whitewater NZ and the submission by Wild Rivers NZ.
- 9 I am in agreement that it is appropriate to categorise the Waitaha catchment as an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) and the Morgan Gorge as an Outstanding Natural Feature (ONF). I also agree that the gorge helps to define the zone of transition from the catchment based ONL and developed river terraces of the lower Waitaha.



- 10 The Morgan Gorge is comparable to the well known and well visited Hokitika Gorge. The Hokitika Gorge does have public access points for people to experience the wild and scenic values. The Hokitika Gorge has become a significant tourist destination for many visitors to the West Coast. Awareness of and access to the Morgan Gorge has been and it continues to be limited. The challenging access engenders a degree of 'remoteness' and this inevitably elevates the wild and scenic values and the Outstandingness and Naturalness of this feature.

#### 4 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL ADVERSE EFFECTS

- 11 The proposed hydro scheme includes two key elements that have the potential to compromise and erode existing values of the ONL and ONF. The intake structure at the top of the gorge includes, but is not limited to, two portals, concrete weirs, a vehicle access-way and excavated faces. The downstream outlet structure includes a substantial concrete structure and building.
- 12 The intake structures, by their very nature and engineering requirements cannot be screened or visually mitigated in any way. By placing these visually conspicuous structures at the entrance to the Morgan Gorge the outstanding natural values of the embedding ONL and those of the gorge itself, being an ONF, would be significantly compromised.
- 13 I agree with the Wild Rivers submission in that *"The construction of an intake weir and adjacent access tunnel portal will be significant and contribute an unacceptable industrial intrusion into an otherwise pristine landscape on public conservation land. The proposal will have an irrevocable impact on the high natural values of this wild river."*
- 14 Having viewed the photo simulations, and being familiar with this technique for presenting potential developments, it is my opinion these developments would be highly visible from the river corridor. Furthermore the scale of these structures, within a highly natural setting, would, without a doubt, erode the outstanding natural values of the ONF. By eroding the outstanding natural values of the ONF the outstanding natural values of the embedding ONL would also be compromised.

#### 5 ALIGNMENT WITH LEGISLATION AND AUTHORITY TO GRANT CONSENT

- 15 The proposal would in my opinion be direct conflict with the purpose of the Conservation Act and the DOC West Coast Conservation Management Strategy. Furthermore, the proposed scheme is contrary to the intent of use of stewardship land.
- 16 My understanding of the Conservation Act is aligned with that of the Wild Rivers submission as follows:
- "Under the Conservation Act Section 17U, the Minister of Conservation can only give permission to build and operate a hydroelectric scheme on the conservation estate if it:*
- 1 Would not compromise the purposes for which the land is held*
  - 2 Could not reasonably be done elsewhere, including in another*

*conservation area where the effects would be less significant."*

- 17 This proposed Hydro-electric scheme would compromise the reason the land is held in public ownership and administered by the department of Conservation. It is possible that other sites exist where such a scheme could be established without compromising the values of the landscape and the purpose for which the land is held.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

- 18 From my assessment of the proposal it is my opinion this scheme would significantly compromise public use and enjoyment of the river corridor and the parcel of public land adjoining the lower Waitaha River and Morgan Gorge.
- 19 The decision to grant the concessions "in principle" should be reversed for reasons, mentioned above. The application for concession should be declined.

6 Nov. 2016

**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 8 November 2016 6:08 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** Waitaha

Please do not dam the Waitaha! This river is such an amazing place, what a beautiful asset to the West Coast and New Zealand. We are blessed to have this river and it makes me so mad to think of this place getting destroyed by some mindless, money-hungry power company, and how ridiculous the local towns don't even need more power anyway! Please make it stop! Great work to everyone who is protesting, you go guys!



RECEIVED  
U / NOV 2016  
BY: *Kell*

Hon Maggie Barry  
Freepost Parliament  
Private Bag 18 888  
Wellington 6160

RECEIVED  
- 7 NOV 2016  
Dept. of  
Conservation

Dear Minister Barry,

Please do not go ahead with the proposed hydro scheme on the Waitaha River. The potentially reduced water flow through the Morgan Gorge will have a negative impact on birds, geckos and native vegetation that reside in this habitat.

Our wild rivers are one of the greatest assets we have, to diminish them at the cost of flora and fauna is foolish and short sighted, especially when there are plenty of other electricity generating options available like wind power or solar. We stand so proudly as kiwis claiming to have this beautiful clean, green land - yet squander the unique aspects of nature by damaging the waterways in interfering with them to produce hydro schemes.

The West Coast is marketed as being a wild, unspoilt environment, please keep the integrity of the Waitaha River intact by looking for less wild rivers to use for hydro electric schemes or using alternative green means of generating power.

I would also urge all concerned to ensure that wild rivers on conservation land are protected from hydro development in their planning documents.

kind regards

Please include  
as a public  
submission



**Lucy Croft**

---

**From:**   
**Sent:** Tuesday, 8 November 2016 11:12 a.m.   
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz   
**Subject:** Waitaha - Morgan gorge Hydro proposal, personal submission John Patterson

Over a 30 year period I have had the pleasure of exploring the upper catchments of the Waitaha River on a number of occasions, my most recent trip was in 2012.

The proposed hydro scheme is a major concern to me, but I am also very concerned that the zoning for the Waitaha river catchment for different types and levels of recreational use has been adapted and downgraded over the last +20yrs to fit the long standing proposal to use the Moran gorge for hydro generation.

To me the real issue is not the current submission process but how this compromise of recreational zoning for Public conservation land has been allowed to occur for so many years to accommodate future hydro generation. All this under different successive Ministers of Conservation? The implication is that DOC at a local level on the West Coast has orchestrated the underutilization of this area for recreational use to facilitate a trade-off of other proposed hydro sites of perceived higher significance.

I am hopeful that as the submission process continues some transparency on the historical decisions relating to this proposed hydro scheme will surface. A ministerial enquiry would not be out of the question on this historic issue and would go a long way to restoring public confidence that the DOC is acting in the best interest for the conservation and protection of all of our public conservation land.

This Hydro proposal is not a viable proposal and should never have been allowed to get this far. The encouraging comments for the hydro scheme from the conservation minister are disconcerting.

Regards





**CONSERVATION ACT 1987 SECTION 17Q****SUBMISSION/OBJECTION ON/TO AN INTENTION TO GRANT CONCESSIONS**

**TO:** Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

**Attention:** Pauline Adams, [permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)

**SUBMITTER:**

**ADDRESS FOR SERVICE:**

**CONCESSION APPLICANT DETAILS:**

**Applicant's name:** Westpower Limited

**Proposal:** Waitaha Hydro Scheme

**Details of application:**

The applicant wishes to obtain a concession to construct, maintain and operate a run-of-the-river hydro scheme at the Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River on Department of Conservation (DOC) stewardship land. Westpower propose to take water off through a highly visible weir across the river and tunnel entrance located in the rock face on the true right bank at the start of the Morgan Gorge. This structure and an adjacent access tunnel portal will be significant industrial intrusions into an otherwise pristine landscape and environment. The scheme proposes to take much of the flow of the river (up to 23 cumecs, river median flow (50% of the time) is 19 cumecs) and leave a residual flow of 3.5 cumecs in the Morgan Gorge at all times – higher and flood flows will still travel down the Morgan Gorge when the proposed Westpower take is exceeded. The water is returned to the river about 2.5 km downstream of the intake via a powerhouse on the north bank of the river.

The reach of the Waitaha River that is of particular concern with respect to the current requested concession is from the powerhouse site upstream to the headwaters of the Waitaha River, and including the Morgan Gorge.

#### **SUBMISSION/OBJECTION:**

**I oppose and object to the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.**

**I do not wish to be heard in support of this submission.**

#### **Introduction**

The Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River, and the Upper Waitaha River including the Waitaha and Windhover Gorges and catchment to the main divide constitute an outstanding wild and scenic river, with outstanding natural beauty, scenery and wilderness values, and outstanding kayaking values for expert and developing kayakers. The Morgan Gorge and the upper Waitaha River runs represent the pinnacle of white water runs for the most skilled of expert kayakers. Therefore, like their exemplars of other outstanding beginner, intermediate, advanced and expert white water runs water throughout the country, some of which are protected by Water Conservation Orders, this river warrants the same statutory recognition and protection.

The proposed Westpower hydro scheme will have a number of significant impacts on the values of the Morgan Gorge, the river above, and a section of the river below the Morgan Gorge, that are currently used by kayakers and other back country recreation users.

#### **Request Declining the Granting of the Concession**

I request that the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River be reversed and that the concession not be granted as the proposed development:

- will impact severely on the natural feature and wilderness and scenic values of the spectacular, powerful, majestic, water carved, fluted, schist rock Morgan Gorge, which separates the upper wild and scenic Waitaha back country catchment from the front country, as well as the whole catchment
- is incompatible with the outstanding natural feature (ONF) status of the Morgan Gorge and outstanding natural landscape (ONL) status of the Waitaha River from the bottom of the Morgan Gorge to the headwaters and values of the stewardship land involved
- is incompatible with the purpose of the Conservation Act, and especially with respect to the purpose of DOC stewardship land
- is not needed for the power it will generate, nor would it provide for greater reliability of power distribution for the West Coast
- is contrary to various Objectives and Policies in Regional and District Plans and the West Coast Conservation Management Strategy

- will prevent current recreational users and particularly kayakers from accessing the Morgan Gorge and a river reach below
- will severely impinge and intrude on the outstanding kayaking, white water, wilderness and landscape values of a wild and scenic West Coast river. The proposed scheme will have a significant adverse effect on the outstanding kayaking values in the river. Such issues are not properly addressed in the application
- the mitigation offered if the scheme goes ahead is not sufficient, workable, or appropriate. This concession without appropriate consent conditions will effectively stop kayakers using the resource, not just in the Morgan Gorge but elsewhere in the catchment, where no mitigation is provided
- New Zealand is swamped with power generation, there are plenty of other less damaging consented power schemes and infrastructure on the West Coast available to provide power, MBIE say we don't need the power, so if this extra generation is not needed why ruin the beautiful wild Waitaha River?
- does not make sense, there is no need to destroy this pristine wilderness river for the sake of power generation that is not needed, don't do it!

*I am not a white water kayaker. However my work uses wilderness environments to help young people grow to be the best people they can be. I am acutely aware of the positive power wild places have on the human psyche. That power exists even for those who never visit wild places; the mere existence of frontiers, beautiful landscapes and wilderness for wilderness' sake is good for society. There is a reason why wilderness scenes feature so prominently on office screen savers.*

*Whatever is decided, the Waitaha River will form part of the legacy that we leave our children. They will not thank us for improving the share value of a power company. They will thank us for leaving them something they don't have to fix, something inspiring, something so wild and beautiful that it feeds their souls.*

For these reasons I ask that the decision on the concession application be reversed and that the Minister decline granting the concession to Westpower.

Date: November 8, 2016



7 November 2016

Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

Attention: Pauline Adams, [permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)

Dear Pauline

**Objection:** We **oppose** the application by Westpower Limited to construct and operate a run of the river hydro scheme on the Waitaha River on the West Coast.

**Remedy sought:** We request that the Minister of Conservation **decline** the concession application from Westpower Limited to construct and operate a run of the river hydro scheme on the Waitaha River on the West Coast, including declining all easements, leases and licences associated with the proposed Hydro scheme.

We wish to be heard in support of our objection to the concession to Westpower Limited.

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**Reasons for our objection:**

1. The proposal does not meet the purpose of the Conservation Act.
2. The applicants case for the national and regional need for electricity from a hydro scheme in the Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha river is not convincing. There are other consented hydro power schemes that can be built, such as the consented 46 MW hydro power station on the Arnold river. We came to this conclusion after reading the analysis by Tony Baldwin "*Proposed Waitaha Hydro Scheme: Assessment of Reasons, Financial Viability, and Alternative Locations*" (<http://www.tonybaldwin.co.nz/publications/>) and the Westpower response to the Baldwin report (<http://www.doc.govt.nz/pagefiles/164710/waitaha-westpower-response-to-baldwin-report.pdf>).
3. We agree with Tony Baldwin's conclusion that the Applicants analysis of alternatives to avoid the adverse environment effects from the construction and running of the Waitaha hydro power scheme are not based on the best available evidence, resulting in inaccurate conclusions. There are alternatives to the proposed scheme, that is, generation at another location, deployment of alternative generation (such as solar), and/or promoting energy conservation.

4. The land is currently classified as “stewardship” land, that is, land waiting on an ecological assessment to decide on an appropriate conservation classification. This exercise needs to be undertaken before the concession is granted, since the adverse impacts from the built infrastructure will reduce the score for wilderness values, naturalness, and intact ecological sequences.
5. The planned built infrastructure will affect the assessed classification as an Outstanding Natural Landscape and Feature. Jeremy Heads notes the gorge and environs have “near pristine levels of natural character” (<http://www.doc.govt.nz/pagefiles/164710/waitaha-landscape-peer-review-2015.pdf>).
6. The hydro scheme will degrade the natural landscape which is not modified by manmade structures and roads, with vegetation that has never been cleared. The impact cannot be reversed or mitigated. It is almost impossible to recreate a natural, ecologically-intact place.
7. The intrinsic ecological and landscape values of “Wild rivers” and “Wilderness” are important to our personal sense of national identity and belonging in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It is what makes our country different to the lands our ancestors arrived from. It is what we wish to see remain for our grandchildren.
8. The earthworks will remove and disturb natural soils, rock and vegetation thereby open the area up to weeds and pests. We are particularly concerned about lupins, gorse and broom establishing in the riverbed higher up in the catchment than they occur today, and the club moss selaginella moving from land disturbed by machinery into the forest.
9. The reduction in river flow through Morgan Gorge will reduce habitat for whio. Removal of ancient trees in the construction footprint will reduce roosts by long-tailed bats.
10. This scheme reminds us of the Mainpower concession to build a windfarm on Mt Cass Station, Waipara, North Canterbury. Like Westpower, Mainpower is a community-owned Trust without the close oversight by shareholders of private companies. Both schemes are small-scale generation with no potential to expand, that require adverse environmental impacts that cannot be fully mitigated. To date the Mt Cass windfarm has not been built. Since the concession was granted a competing, larger windfarm (Hurunui Wind) with far less environmental impact was consented (and has yet to be constructed). On Mt Cass, the initial engineering works have cut roads and platforms into a rare limestone ecosystem and this disturbance has resulted in weeds displacing the former semi-natural vegetation, all for no productive gain. The active consent has put on hold strategies to better manage the high biodiversity values in the consented envelop. Mainpower have just had another hydro scheme declined on the Kakapo brook. The lack of strong financial and environmental scrutiny within these small Trusts wastes money that belongs to the community shareholders.
11. Declining this application for an industrial use of the land and river does not mean that the river and gorge will never contribute to the regional and national GDP and wellbeing. Declining the application retains potential uses for Eco-tourism, adventure tourism, or uses not yet envisaged such as pay-per-view streaming video of the river running through the pristine gorge around the world.

**CONSERVATION ACT 1987 SECTION 17Q****SUBMISSION/OBJECTION ON/TO AN INTENTION TO GRANT CONCESSIONS**

**TO:** Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

**Attention:** Pauline Adams, [permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)

**SUBMITTER:****ADDRESS FOR SERVICE:****CONCESSION APPLICANT DETAILS:**

**Applicant's name:** Westpower Limited

**Proposal:** Waitaha Hydro Scheme

**Details of application:**

The applicant wishes to obtain a concession to construct, maintain and operate a run-of-the-river hydro scheme at the Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River on Department of Conservation (DOC) stewardship land. Westpower propose to take water off through a highly visible weir across the river and tunnel entrance located in the rock face on the true right bank at the start of the Morgan Gorge. This structure and an adjacent access tunnel portal will be significant industrial intrusions into an otherwise pristine landscape and environment. The scheme proposes to take much of the flow of the river (up to 23 cumecs, river median flow (50% of the time) is 19 cumecs) and leave a residual flow of 3.5 cumecs in the Morgan Gorge at all times – higher and flood flows will still travel down the Morgan Gorge when the proposed Westpower take is exceeded. The water is returned to the river about 2.5 km downstream of the intake via a powerhouse on the north bank of the river.

The reach of the Waitaha River that is of particular concern with respect to the current requested concession is from the powerhouse site upstream to the headwaters of the Waitaha River, and including the Morgan Gorge.

#### **SUBMISSION/OBJECTION:**

**I oppose and object to the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.**

#### **Introduction**

The Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River, and the Upper Waitaha River including the Waitaha and Windhover Gorges and catchment to the main divide constitute an outstanding wild and scenic river, with outstanding natural beauty, scenery and wilderness values, and outstanding kayaking values for expert and developing kayakers. The Morgan Gorge and the upper Waitaha River runs represent the pinnacle of white water runs for the most skilled of expert kayakers. Therefore, like their exemplars of other outstanding beginner, intermediate, advanced and expert white water runs water throughout the country, some of which are protected by Water Conservation Orders, this river warrants the same statutory recognition and protection.

The proposed Westpower hydro scheme will have a number of significant impacts on the values of the Morgan Gorge, the river above, and a section of the river below the Morgan Gorge, that are currently used by kayakers and other back country recreation users.

#### **Request Declining the Granting of the Concession**

I request that the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River be reversed and **that the concession not be granted** as the proposed development:

- will impact severely on the natural feature and wilderness and scenic values of the spectacular, powerful, majestic, water carved, fluted, schist rock Morgan Gorge, which separates the upper wild and scenic Waitaha back country catchment from the front country, as well as the whole catchment
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- is contrary to various Objectives and Policies in Regional and District Plans and the West Coast Conservation Management Strategy
- will prevent current recreational users and particularly kayakers from accessing the



Morgan Gorge and a river reach below

- will severely impinge and intrude on the outstanding kayaking, white water, wilderness and landscape values of a wild and scenic West Coast river. The proposed scheme will have a significant adverse effect on the outstanding kayaking values in the river. Such issues are not properly addressed in the application
- the mitigation offered if the scheme goes ahead is not sufficient, workable, or appropriate. This concession without appropriate consent conditions will effectively stop kayakers using the resource, not just in the Morgan Gorge but elsewhere in the catchment, where no mitigation is provided
- New Zealand is swamped with power generation, there are plenty of other less damaging consented power schemes and infrastructure on the West Coast available to provide power, MBIE say we don't need the power, so if this extra generation is not needed why ruin the beautiful wild Waitaha River?
- does not make sense, there is no need to destroy this pristine wilderness river for the sake of power generation that is not needed, don't do it!

As well as a keen kayaker and appreciator of the natural and wild landscapes in New Zealand I am also a Chartered Civil Engineer. Civil engineers are behind the essential infrastructure that society depends, and with that comes the responsibility to build essential infrastructure that shapes our world giving thought to the past, present and future. Current challenges we face are water poverty, growing urbanization, energy shortages and dramatic climate effects.

I feel compelled as a civil engineer to act and challenge what is being done in respect to taking away this natural asset for New Zealand. Once it is gone, it is gone. What other impacts and precedence will it set for how the resources in New Zealand should be managed? I ask that you ruminate over all the social, economic and environmental aspects of this proposal to give due consideration to why this scheme would be right to go ahead.

If this scheme was to go ahead it would shape New Zealand in a way that would not be recoverable in the future and I question what real or necessary benefits it gives now that can't be realised in a different way; that enables this area of outstanding status to be preserved and continue as part of the legacy of New Zealand's natural heritage.

I appeal to you, to give time and consideration to why this scheme would be of benefit to the legacy of New Zealand. Give time to asking the right 'why' questions:

'why does this scheme need to be built?'

'why is this an appropriate scheme to be build over other alternatives?'

'why can't we make more efficient use of existing infrastructure?'

These are always tough questions to answer and problems to tackle. However, with the information I have reviewed, I struggle as a civil engineer to justify how this would be a right energy solution. It is flawed in its ability to be sustainable due to the imbalance between its environmental, social and economic impacts.

For these reasons I ask that the decision on the concession application be reversed and that the Minister decline granting the concession to Westpower.

**Date:** November 8, 2016

**I oppose the proposal to develop a hydro facility on the Waitaha river on the following grounds**

- 1) The land in question is "stewardship land" and as such no decision has been made on what protection should be applied to it. The Westpower proposal pre-empts the process of establishing conservation values of this river and its surrounding environs and thus the protection value which should be applied to it
- 2) It is highly likely that there is no national need for the power that would be generated.
- 3) The argument that a more reliable supply of electricity can be supplied to the West Coast by the propose scheme is weak given there are alternatives to addressing this issue
- 4) The dam would destroy a significant recreation resource
- 5) I have read the Concession Officers Report and with reference to part 3b of the Conversation Act, in particular those matters listed under 17U are of the view that **cumulatively** the potential adverse effects are substantial and the proposed mitigation measures **cumulatively** have too many unknowns and conclude the risks substantially outweigh benefits of the scheme, which, as noted above I call in question

I do not wish to be heard at the hearings

8 November 2016



## Lucy Croft

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 8 November 2016 9:30 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Cc:** Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Attention: Pauline Adams

Kei te kōrero ahau mō te awa Waitaha  
 I speak for the Waitaha

I have not been to the Waitaha. I have not paddled it's pristine, wild waters, thundering from the upper reaches, squeezing through narrow gorges, emerging at the coast to meld with the sea. I have not wandered the wilderness surrounding this lively blood of our land. But just because I have not been there, does not mean it does not exist, and does not diminish it's value one iota. The fact that this place exists brings me joy beyond words. And the fact that there is an entity who believes they can take that away, to alter forever a part of this earth we call home, makes me feel sick.

I say I speak for the Waitaha, but this is incorrect. This river, and all other wild places, speak for themselves to those who care to listen. No, they do not speak in words, our language of the ignorant through which we claim innocence. But if they could, would that change your view? If, in the surveying, a river could look up at you with the sad eyes of one betrayed by it's children, and whisper "why would you want to hurt me?" Would you listen then? Please, listen now. Don't wait until it is too late.

The river speaks the most ancient of languages. It will continue for as long as it has run, and will continue long after we have gone. Take pause and try to understand, and you shall. You only need ask any of those among the team who completed the first descent of Morgan's Gorge just what the river carries. Wisdom, poise, power, thrill.

I do not speak for the river. She speaks for herself. But for those who do not understand, or are deaf to hear her, my attempt is to translate a feeling, a knowing, an understanding, in to a language which simply cannot encompass the vastness, the strength, the immenseness of the value this river carries.

There is a whakatauki, a saying:

"Ko te awa ko au; ko au ko te awa."

I am the river. The river is me.

The river is all of us. The river is our future generations. The river is our parent, grandparent, ancestor.

All over the world we see the same fight, the same struggle for land, water, sacred and wild places being exploited, enslaved, beaten down by people, companies, corporations who believe they can own and take without thought of the future. Some places have had triumph with the land being awarded legal status as a living being. Western thought has been so far removed from nature for so long that even our language struggles to explain concepts that in indigenous communities there is a word for. Thoughts and ways of being that permeate the way of life. Respect for all life, all that sustains us. Kaitiakitanga. Manaakitanga.

We are not apart from nature, we are a part of nature. What we do to this land we do to ourselves, and to all generations to come. Lets make it positive, not something to be ashamed of, something which destructs, destroys and definitely is not a long term solution.

As this is currently a conservation decision, say NO. There is absolutely no way that this proposed scheme fits with the ethos of our country's view of the natural world, with the work of the Department of Conservation, with the 100% Pure image we claim to have. This is OUR land, belonging to the people of NZ. As a wild area it should be protected, just because it is under 'stewardship' status does NOT mean it is up for grabs. To change forever an area of such high value will always outweigh any benefit that may be gained, and in this context the balance is very skewed.

I am opposed to this scheme, in heart, mind, and soul.

I request that the Minister of Conservation decline the Application.

Intrinsic value is value regardless of who, or how many people go there. And what of all the birds, bats, trees, fish, and other creatures of the area? They too cannot speak, but are there if you choose to listen. This is their home, the weight of their cries should be considered a hearty opposition to this scheme. It is not needed, not wanted, and in direct opposition to the Conservation Act 1987.

Ko te awa ko au; ko au ko te awa  
Kei te haere mātou ki te koraha  
Ka kite ano ahea kei ngaro tā koutou  
pōrewarewatanga - E oho tātou!

Kaua e hōhā  
Kaua e whakamā  
Ko te mea nui  
Ko te aroha  
Aroha ki a koe  
Aroha ki ahau  
me aroha ki te taiao  
Ka āio te ngākau

Kuhu mai ki te ngahere  
Whakarongo - Tāwhiri!  
E korero ana ia ki ngā rakau nui me iti  
Titiro ki ngā manu, e rere ana rātou  
Kuhu mai, kuhu mai. wheakotia tātou

E oho tātou  
Awhi atu awhi mai  
Mahia kotahi tātou  
Ko te ao tō tātou kainga

Ngā hau tāwhiti mai rā  
Ngā hau tātā mai rā  
Tirotiro tō paenga  
Me maimoatia

Haere atu ki te taha o te awa ngunguru  
Te kaha o Waitaha, he wai nui, wai tapu  
Titiro ki ngā kohatu. e tū ana rātou

Haere atu, haere mai wheakotia tātou

Kaua e ngaro tēnei taonga tuku iho  
 He nanawe te ihiihi o tēnei wero  
 Whaia ki te aroha i tō tātou manawa  
 Me kanohi kitea tātou  
 Kei tāmauatia te kaupapa

Wheakotia  
 E oho  
 E tū  
 Maranga mai ngā tāngata o te motu  
 E tū mō ngā wāhi ataahua nei  
 Korero ki nga tāngata kātoa nā konei

E tū mo te awa, Waitaha, Waitaha!  
 Kia kōtahi rā tatou mō tēnei kaupapa

The river is me; I am the river, we are the same  
 We're leaving into the wilderness  
 See you all again when you've come to your senses  
 Wake up everybody!

Don't be bored,  
 Don't be shy  
 The greatest thing  
 Is love  
 Love to you  
 Love to me  
 And love to the whole world around us  
 Peace to our hearts

Come into the forest  
 listen - the wind!  
 He talks to the trees, big and little  
 Look at the birds, all flying around  
 Come in, experience it, feel the connection for yourself

Wake up everyone  
 Giving away and receiving back  
 Working all together  
 For this world that is our home

From so far away  
 to as close as can be  
 pay attention to your surroundings  
 lets care for it all

Go to the side of the raging river  
 Feel the strength of Waitaha, important and tapu  
 Look at the rocks, standing solid and strong  
 Go, come, experience it for yourself

Lets not lose this treasure passed down  
 Feel the trembling excitement of this challenge  
 Search for the passion and compassion in your heart  
 Lets all be seen and heard  
 Hold on fast to this purpose  
 Experience it  
 Wake up  
 Stand your ground  
 Arise, all people of Aotearoa  
 Stand up for these beautiful places  
 And so tell everybody, all the people  
 Stand up for Waitaha!  
 And all stand together in unity to save this river.





Lucy Croft

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 9 November 2016 12:17 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Attention: Pauline Adams

I am opposed to the application by Westpower Limited for a Lease, Easement and License for a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River.

I request that the Minister of Conservation decline the Application because:  
The proposal does not meet the purpose of the Conservation Act.

I lived in Greymouth for 5 years from 1985, and actually know where the Waitaha River is without looking it up on Google maps! Huge gains were made for conservation in those years. Being a local resident I and my family were able to be part of the change of heart of the Westcoast population. It was a time where Coasters started to see sustainable employment in tourism as a option than the old industries particularly logging, that mined the Coasts natural assets.

This proposed Westpower hydro scheme goes against the tide of change that moved so quickly in the 1980's. If it is not stopped and goes ahead as planned it will open minds to the hydro electric potential of other pristine West Coast rivers head on into the gains made in the 1980's.

This hydro scheme will have an irrevocable impact on the high natural values of this really wonderful wild river. The mitigation proposed by Westpower will not mitigate the impacts of the intrusion of man made structures and altered river flows.

The Waitaha is a truly wild river and its intrinsic character that includes the native flora and fauna would be permanently destroyed by building a hydro scheme on public conservation land.

The impacts on the values of the Waitaha River include:

The intrinsic nature of this magnificent undisturbed river in South Westland.  
The Waitaha is an unobstructed wild river.

There is wide agreement that it is an outstanding natural landscape.

The Morgan Gorge is an outstanding natural feature and one of the most spectacular gorges in the country. The construction of a weir and associated infrastructure close to where the Waitaha enters the gorge will have an entirely unacceptable and inappropriate impact on the overwhelming naturalness of this special place.

The upper catchment of the Waitaha is highly valued for its sense of remoteness by trampers and hunters alike and is considered to be of international significance for kayakers.

There are NO mitigation measures that can compensate for the changes proposed by Westpower which in summary will change the upper Waitaha from an outstanding wild and remote experience into a significantly modified and 'industrialised' environment as a result of the reduced river flow, weir and associated infrastructure.

The values of the Waitaha are important in and of itself.

Effects on significant flora and fauna habitat include:

The permanent loss of 3.5 ha of native forest with a reduction in the intactness of the vegetation.

The removal of vegetation as a result of the proposal will cause the permanent loss of habitat for of lizard species at risk of extinction, including the green and forest gecko.

Westpower has not adequately assessed the presence of these highly threatened species and have not given any assurance that the impacts on them can be properly avoided or mitigated.

The proposal will result in the destruction of these nationally important species, any loss therefore is significant. Westpower has identified 27 native bird species with the hydro footprint, including a number of threatened native bird species. These include kaka, falcon and whio.

Westpower notes that western weka are recorded in the catchment. Western weka are genetically distinct from other populations of weka north of the Waitaha catchment. There is insufficient information about the impacts of the resident whio population, including the importance of the Morgan Gorge to them. There can be no confidence that Westpower is able to avoid, remedy or mitigate impacts on this iconic species, including the impacts of construction and the dewatering of the Morgan Gorge.

The long tailed bat is present within the footprint. The clearance of habitat and tree felling will result in loss of both their breeding and feeding habitat and has the potential to cause the death of bats. This is an entirely unacceptable and inappropriate risk and one that cannot be adequately mitigated for.

There are other alternatives for hydro generation on the West Coast. Some are already consented including schemes on the Arnold River and at Stockton.

There is no case for further hydro generation that justifies the destruction of such a wild and special place as the Waitaha.

Yours.

**CONSERVATION ACT 1987 SECTION 170****SUBMISSION/OBJECTION ON/TO AN INTENTION TO GRANT CONCESSIONS**

**TO:** Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

**Attention:** Pauline Adams, [permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)

**SUBMITTER:**

**ADDRESS FOR SERVICE:**

**CONCESSION APPLICANT DETAILS:**

**Applicant's name:** Westpower Limited

**Proposal:** Waitaha Hydro Scheme

**Details of application:**

The applicant wishes to obtain a concession to construct, maintain and operate a run-of-the-river hydro scheme at the Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River on Department of Conservation (DOC) stewardship land. Westpower propose to take water off through a highly visible weir across the river and tunnel entrance located in the rock face on the true right bank at the start of the Morgan Gorge. This structure and an adjacent access tunnel portal will be significant industrial intrusions into an otherwise pristine landscape and environment. The scheme proposes to take much of the flow of the river (up to 23 cumecs, river median flow (50% of the time) is 19 cumecs) and leave a residual flow of 3.5 cumecs in the Morgan Gorge at all times – higher and flood flows will still travel down the Morgan Gorge when the proposed Westpower take is exceeded. The water is returned to the river about 2.5 km downstream of the intake via a powerhouse on the north bank of the river.

The reach of the Waitaha River that is of particular concern with respect to the current requested concession is from the powerhouse site upstream to the headwaters of the Waitaha River, and including the Morgan Gorge.

## **SUBMISSION/OBJECTION:**

**I oppose and object to the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.**

### **Introduction**

The Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River, and the Upper Waitaha River including the Waitaha and Windhover Gorges and catchment to the main divide constitute an outstanding wild and scenic river, with outstanding natural beauty, scenery and wilderness values, and outstanding kayaking values for expert and developing kayakers. The Morgan Gorge and the upper Waitaha River runs represent the pinnacle of white water runs for the most skilled of expert kayakers. Therefore, like their exemplars of other outstanding beginner, intermediate, advanced and expert white water runs water throughout the country, some of which are protected by Water Conservation Orders, this river warrants the same statutory recognition and protection.

The proposed Westpower hydro scheme will have a number of significant impacts on the values of the Morgan Gorge, the river above, and a section of the river below the Morgan Gorge, that are currently used by kayakers and other back country recreation users.

### **Request Declining the Granting of the Concession**

I request that the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River be reversed and that the concession not be granted as the proposed development:

- will impact severely on the natural feature and wilderness and scenic values of the spectacular, powerful, majestic, water carved, fluted, schist rock Morgan Gorge, which separates the upper wild and scenic Waitaha back country catchment from the front country, as well as the whole catchment
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- is contrary to various Objectives and Policies in Regional and District Plans and the West Coast Conservation Management Strategy
- will prevent current recreational users and particularly kayakers from accessing the Morgan Gorge and a river reach below
- will severely impinge and intrude on the outstanding kayaking, white water, wilderness and landscape values of a wild and scenic West Coast river. The proposed scheme will have a significant adverse effect on the outstanding kayaking values in the river. Such issues are not properly addressed in the application

- the mitigation offered if the scheme goes ahead is not sufficient, workable, or appropriate. This concession without appropriate consent conditions will effectively stop kayakers using the resource, not just in the Morgan Gorge but elsewhere in the catchment, where no mitigation is provided
- New Zealand is swamped with power generation, there are plenty of other less damaging consented power schemes and infrastructure on the West Coast available to provide power, MBIE say we don't need the power, so if this extra generation is not needed why ruin the beautiful wild Waitaha River?
- does not make sense, there is no need to destroy this pristine wilderness river for the sake of power generation that is not needed, don't do it!
- Opens the way for further needless development of New Zealand's conservation land
- The rivers' whitewater is a goal for many, removes an icon from the NZ kayaking scene, and prevents people from further enjoying the amenity

I am 22 years old, with my whole life ahead of me in terms of exploring and appreciating what New Zealand has to offer. Since I began kayaking it has been a goal of mine to descend the Waitaha River, something I have been prevented from doing this past year due to recurring injuries. To rob myself and many others, who kayak, fish, tramp, from enjoying this wilderness area as unaffected by human development is senseless and wasteful. With all of the supporting evidence against the financial viability of this scheme, and New Zealand's current excess of power generation, how is this even being considered? Is it really worth destroying a wilderness icon, for no sure economic or social benefit? I plan to live in New Zealand for my whole life, have a family here. I do not want this to be a country where we willfully plunder our natural resources for tiny perceived economic gain. New Zealand has a reputation as environmentally conscious and good caretakers of our land, and this scheme directly opposes these notions.

For these reasons I ask that the decision on the concession application be reversed and that the Minister decline granting the concession to Westpower.

**Date:** November 10, 2016



**Lucy Croft**

**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 9 November 2016 9:56 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Attention: Pauline Adams

We are opposed to the application by Westpower Limited for a Lease, Easement and License for a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River.

We request that the Minister of Conservation decline the Application.

We oppose the application because: The proposal does not meet the purpose of the Conservation Act.

The proposal will have an irrevocable impact on the high natural values of this wild river. The mitigation proposed by Westpower will not mitigate the impacts of the intrusion of manmade structures and altered river flows on this landscape.

There clearly are alternatives to damming the Waitaha River. These alternatives are not on Conservation land.

This is a truly wild river and its intrinsic character that includes the native flora and fauna would be permanently destroyed by imposing a hydro scheme on public conservation land.

The impacts on these values include: The intrinsic nature of the magnificent undisturbed river in South Westland.

The Waitaha is an unobstructed wild river.

There is wide agreement that it is an outstanding natural landscape.

The Morgan Gorge is an outstanding natural feature and one of the most spectacular gorges in the country.

The construction of a weir and associated infrastructure close to where the Waitaha enters the gorge will have an entirely unacceptable and inappropriate impact on the overwhelming naturalness of this special place.

The upper catchment of the Waitaha is highly valued for its sense of remoteness by trampers and hunters alike and is considered to be of international significance for kayakers.

There are no mitigation measures that can compensate for the change from an outstanding wild and remote experience in the upper Waitaha to what will become a significantly modified and 'industrialised' environment as a result of the reduced river flow, weir and associated infrastructure.

The values of the Waitaha are important in and of itself.

Effects on significant flora and fauna habitat:

The permanent loss of 3.5 ha of native forest with a reduction in the intactness of the vegetation.

The removal of vegetation as a result of the proposal will cause the permanent loss of habitat for lizard species at risk of extinction, including the green and forest gecko.

Westpower has not adequately assessed the presence of these highly threatened species and have not given any assurance that the impacts on them can be properly avoided or mitigated.

The proposal will result in the destruction of these nationally important species, any loss therefore is significant.

Westpower has identified 27 native bird species with the hydro footprint, including a number of threatened native bird species. These include kaka, falcon and whio.

Westpower notes that western weka are recorded in the catchment. Western weka are genetically distinct from other populations of weka north of the Waitaha catchment. There is insufficient information about the impacts of the resident whio population, including the importance of the Morgan Gorge to them. There can be no confidence that Westpower is able to avoid, remedy or mitigate impacts on this iconic species, including the impacts of construction and the dewatering of the Morgan Gorge.

The long tailed bat is present within the footprint. The clearance of habitat and tree felling will result in loss of both their breeding and feeding habitat and has the potential to cause the death of bats. This is an entirely unacceptable and inappropriate risk and one that cannot be adequately mitigated for.

Furthermore, there are already other alternatives for hydro generation on the West Coast. There are already consented proposals for hydro including the schemes on the Arnold River and at Stockton. There is no case for further hydro generation that justifies the destruction of such a wild and special place.

This may be a remote area for many people, just because it is not freely accessible does not mean the natural values need to be destroyed. Such pristine "wilderness" areas are rare these days and their ecosystems are important and critical for the natural environment. We have a duty to make sure that future generations can enjoy the fact that such areas still exist, without having to visit. There is a clear need to value areas even if only a few people can get to it.





**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 9 November 2016 10:56 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Attention: Pauline Adams

I am opposed to the application by Westpower Limited for a Lease, Easement and License for a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River and request that the Minister of Conservation decline the Application.

I oppose the application because: The proposal does not meet the purpose of the Conservation Act. The Minister is supposed to advocate for Conservation and only override conservation values if there are special circumstances which justify this action. In the case of the Waitaha such circumstances do not apply. I have spent the last 6 years working on the West Coast and have witnessed first hand the fall in population and industry. Electricity needs there are declining, and availability has risen - to the extent that 2 already consented schemes (with much less adverse environmental impact) at Stockton and the Arnold have been put on hold because they are uneconomic. Furthermore electricity transmission capacity has also improved. I very much hope that employment opportunities on the Coast will blossom again, but its main hope at present is in the preservation and marketing of its natural beauty, which this scheme clearly negates.

It seems that the only current justification for this scheme is to provide temporary work in the construction phase and to work towards regional self-sufficiency in energy suppl. But building a potential white elephant and in the process wrecking the natural environment (not to mention many endangered native species) seems a very poor reason for over-riding the core conservation principle of keeping heavy industry out of the conservation estate. And there is no pressing reason why any region should be self-sufficient in energy given that transmission is efficient and has been recently upgraded, many electricity sources (including this one) are seasonal and it makes much more sense to plan nationally and distribute according to need.

The proposal will have an irrevocable impact on the high natural values of this wild river. The mitigation proposed by Westpower will not mitigate the impacts of the intrusion of manmade structures and altered river flows on this landscape. Once destroyed, such lanscapes and habitats can never be replaced. This is a special place and there is no correspondingly special need for it to be destroyed.

I trust DOC and the Minister to uphold conservation values and not be seduced by inappropriate and misguided commercial proposals. Please do not betray that trust.

Kind regards,

Yours,



**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 9 November 2016 11:37 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Waitaha River Proposal

I am appalled that you might even consider giving approval in principle for this power scheme. As a former West Coaster (born in Hokitika and with relatives who farmed in the Waitaha Valley) I cannot fathom how you justify supporting such a scheme, when it simply does not stack up - neither financially nor environmentally.

There are alternatives, e.g.. Arnold River, which is not proceeding because of low demand and they cannot make a business case.

Do you want to be accused of transgressing the Conservation Act? It makes a mockery of the law if you support this proposal. There is no case for further hydro generation that justifies the destruction of such a wild and special place.  
Yours,



**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 9 November 2010 11:20 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** Waitaha Scheme attn Pauline Adams

Director-General  
 Department of Conservation  
 Private Bag 701  
 Hokitika 7842

Attention Pauline Adams

Re Waitaha Hydro Proposal

I wish to lodge my objections to the scheme.

Having read details of the proposal I fail to see any justification for such devastation.

The area has yet to be thoroughly assessed and it's appropriate status determined.

This is reason enough to leave in it's pristine state until this can be done.

The habitat and behaviour of Whio, Kaka, Kea, Falcon and Long-tailed bats will be adversely affected.

These are all species whose habitats are under threat.

It is therefore imperative that the wilderness areas in which they are now found must be left intact.

**THIS IS ONE SUCH AREA!!!!**

'Mitigating' strategies suggested to date have been frankly laughable!!!!

Can you see a gang of blasters waiting patiently for Whio to move off of their own accord particularly if they are nesting in the area?

LT bats are already on the endangered list so who is going to ensure that there are no LT bats in the trees before they start cutting the swathe or blasting in the area?

And if there are what then?

Kea, kaka and falcon also need their habitat protected.

Likewise the freshwater species.

To it's credit DOC does concede that the effects on the Morgan Gorge CAN NOT be mitigated.

It should be abundantly clear to DOC that the 'mitigating' strategies to protect the affected wildlife are impractical!!!

### Summary

The area covered by the proposal has yet to be thoroughly assessed to determine it's appropriate status.

It must therefore be left in it's pristine state until this has been done.

The 'mitigating' strategies to protect wildlife in the area are impractical.

**There are no mitigating strategies that would protect the Morgan Gorge**

**The destruction of such an area to exploit it's water flow for hydro-power is unjustified and to my mind could be described as ecological vandalism.**

**I wish to lodge my strong objection to this scheme.**

**CONSERVATION ACT 1987 SECTION 17Q****SUBMISSION/OBJECTION ON/TO AN INTENTION TO GRANT CONCESSIONS**

**TO:** Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

**Attention:** Pauline Adams, [permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)

**SUBMITTER:**

**ADDRESS FOR SERVICE:**

**CONCESSION APPLICANT DETAILS:**

**Applicant's name:** Westpower Limited

**Proposal:** Waitaha Hydro Scheme

**Details of application:**

The applicant wishes to obtain a concession to construct, maintain and operate a run-of-the-river hydro scheme at the Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River on Department of Conservation (DOC) stewardship land. Westpower propose to take water off through a highly visible weir across the river and tunnel entrance located in the rock face on the true right bank at the start of the Morgan Gorge. This structure and an adjacent access tunnel portal will be significant industrial intrusions into an otherwise pristine landscape and environment. The scheme proposes to take much of the flow of the river (up to 23 cumecs, river median flow (50% of the time) is 19 cumecs) and leave a residual flow of 3.5 cumecs in the Morgan Gorge at all times – higher and flood flows will still travel down the Morgan Gorge when the proposed Westpower take is exceeded. The water is returned to the river about 2.5 km downstream of the intake via a powerhouse on the north bank of the river.

The reach of the Waitaha River that is of particular concern with respect to the current requested concession is from the powerhouse site upstream to the headwaters of the Waitaha River, and including the Morgan Gorge.

## **SUBMISSION/OBJECTION:**

**I oppose and object to the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.**

**I do not wish to be heard in support of this submission.**

### **Introduction**

The Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River, and the Upper Waitaha River including the Waitaha and Windhover Gorges and catchment to the main divide constitute an outstanding wild and scenic river, with outstanding natural beauty, scenery and wilderness values, and outstanding kayaking values for expert and developing kayakers. The Morgan Gorge and the upper Waitaha River runs represent the pinnacle of white water runs for the most skilled of expert kayakers. Therefore, like their exemplars of other outstanding beginner, intermediate, advanced and expert white water runs water throughout the country, some of which are protected by Water Conservation Orders, this river warrants the same statutory recognition and protection.

The proposed Westpower hydro scheme will have a number of significant impacts on the values of the Morgan Gorge, the river above, and a section of the river below the Morgan Gorge, that are currently used by kayakers and other back country recreation users.

### **Request Declining the Granting of the Concession**

I request that the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River be reversed and that the concession not be granted as the proposed development:

- is not renewable energy because the gorges and the surrounding area will never be able to be renewed in the sense of being returned to their natural state
- does not appear to be part of a nationwide assessment of energy need now and in the future, balanced with assessment of rivers that could provide some hydro power without such dramatic loss of habitat and conservation value
- will impact severely on the natural feature and wilderness and scenic values of the spectacular, powerful, majestic, water carved, fluted, schist rock Morgan Gorge, which separates the upper wild and scenic Waitaha back country catchment from the front country, as well as the whole catchment
- is incompatible with the outstanding natural feature (ONF) status of the Morgan Gorge and outstanding natural landscape (ONL) status of the Waitaha River from the bottom of the Morgan Gorge to the headwaters and values of the stewardship land involved
- is incompatible with the purpose of the Conservation Act, and especially with respect to the purpose of DOC stewardship land
- is not needed for the power it will generate, nor would it provide for greater reliability of power distribution for the West Coast
- is contrary to various Objectives and Policies in Regional and District Plans and the West



**Coast Conservation Management Strategy**

- will prevent current recreational users and particularly kayakers from accessing the Morgan Gorge and a river reach below
- will severely impinge and intrude on the outstanding kayaking, white water, wilderness and landscape values of a wild and scenic West Coast river. The proposed scheme will have a significant adverse effect on the outstanding kayaking values in the river. Such issues are not properly addressed in the application
- the mitigation offered if the scheme goes ahead is not sufficient, workable, or appropriate. This concession without appropriate consent conditions will effectively stop kayakers using the resource, not just in the Morgan Gorge but elsewhere in the catchment, where no mitigation is provided
- New Zealand is swamped with power generation, there are plenty of other less damaging consented power schemes and infrastructure on the West Coast available to provide power, MBIE say we don't need the power, so if this extra generation is not needed why ruin the beautiful wild Waitaha River?
- does not make sense, there is no need to destroy this pristine wilderness river for the sake of power generation that is not needed, don't do it!

**Our economy is increasingly reliant on tourism, and our brand as 100% pure NZ is at great risk if we continue to value short term wealth and energy generation over long term environmental stewardship. We need tourism as a major source of income into our economy, and in order to grow this industry we need to shore up, rather than undermine our global reputation for untouched wilderness.**

**I am very concerned that as a country we are not currently valuing the irreplaceable wild places across Aotearoa New Zealand highly enough. Rivers like the Waitaha are extremely rare on a global level, at a time when fewer and fewer rivers run wild over their whole course. Wild places sustain people, both by the sheer fact that they exist and we may choose to go and explore them, and as sources of mental and spiritual inspiration for those who do visit them.**

**For these reasons I ask that the decision on the concession application be reversed and that the Minister decline granting the concession to Westpower.**

**Date: November 10, 2016**



**CONSERVATION ACT 1987 SECTION 17Q****SUBMISSION/OBJECTION ON/TO AN INTENTION TO GRANT CONCESSIONS**

**TO:** Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

**Attention:** Pauline Adams, [permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)

**SUBMITTER:****ADDRESS FOR SERVICE:****CONCESSION APPLICANT DETAILS:**

**Applicant's name:** Westpower Limited

**Proposal:** Waitaha Hydro Scheme

**Details of application:**

The applicant wishes to obtain a concession to construct, maintain and operate a run-of-the-river hydro scheme at the Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River on Department of Conservation (DOC) stewardship land. Westpower propose to take water off through a highly visible weir across the river and tunnel entrance located in the rock face on the true right bank at the start of the Morgan Gorge. This structure and an adjacent access tunnel portal will be significant industrial intrusions into an otherwise pristine landscape and environment. The scheme proposes to take much of the flow of the river (up to 23 cumecs, river median flow (50% of the time) is 19 cumecs) and leave a residual flow of 3.5 cumecs in the Morgan Gorge at all times – higher and flood flows will still travel down the Morgan Gorge when the proposed Westpower take is exceeded. The water is returned to the river about 2.5 km downstream of the intake via a powerhouse on the north bank of the river.

The reach of the Waitaha River that is of particular concern with respect to the current requested concession is from the powerhouse site upstream to the headwaters of the Waitaha River, and

including the Morgan Gorge.

**SUBMISSION/OBJECTION:**

**I oppose and object to the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.**

**Introduction**

The Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River, and the Upper Waitaha River including the Waitaha and Windhover Gorges and catchment to the main divide constitute an outstanding wild and scenic river, with outstanding natural beauty, scenery and wilderness values, and outstanding kayaking values for expert and developing kayakers. The Morgan Gorge and the upper Waitaha River runs represent the pinnacle of white water runs for the most skilled of expert kayakers. Therefore, like their exemplars of other outstanding beginner, intermediate, advanced and expert white water runs water throughout the country, some of which are protected by Water Conservation Orders, this river warrants the same statutory recognition and protection.

The proposed Westpower hydro scheme will have a number of significant impacts on the values of the Morgan Gorge, the river above, and a section of the river below the Morgan Gorge, that are currently used by kayakers and other back country recreation users.

**Request Declining the Granting of the Concession**

I request that the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River be reversed and that the concession not be granted as the proposed development:

- will impact severely on the natural feature and wilderness and scenic values of the spectacular, powerful, majestic, water carved, fluted, schist rock Morgan Gorge, which separates the upper wild and scenic Waitaha back country catchment from the front country, as well as the whole catchment
- is incompatible with the outstanding natural feature (ONF) status of the Morgan Gorge and outstanding natural landscape (ONL) status of the Waitaha River from the bottom of the Morgan Gorge to the headwaters and values of the stewardship land involved
- is incompatible with the purpose of the Conservation Act, and especially with respect to the purpose of DOC stewardship land
- is contrary to various Objectives and Policies in Regional and District Plans and the West Coast Conservation Management Strategy
- will prevent current recreational users and particularly kayakers from accessing the Morgan Gorge and a river reach below
- will severely impinge and intrude on the outstanding kayaking, white water, wilderness and landscape values of a wild and scenic West Coast river. The proposed scheme will have a significant adverse effect on the outstanding kayaking values in the river. Such issues are not properly addressed in the application

- the mitigation offered if the scheme goes ahead is not sufficient, workable, or appropriate. This concession without appropriate consent conditions will effectively stop kayakers using the resource, not just in the Morgan Gorge but elsewhere in the catchment, where no mitigation is provided
- does not make sense, there is no need to destroy this pristine wilderness river for the sake of power generation that is not needed, don't do it!

I have been a whitewater kayaker and am now an outdoors consultant regularly exposed to the natural beauty of our rivers and witness to the loss of many whitewater rapids through hydro schemes.

In recent years, kayaking standards have risen and the Waitaha will become increasingly popular. NZ is fast becoming an international destination for whitewater kayakers and New Zealanders kayaker numbers will surely boom following Luka Jone's Olympic slalom medal.

Damming the Waitaha is old-world exploitation thinking. Modern thinking recognises the value of natural environments and looks ahead to future use and different values.

For these reasons I ask that the decision on the concession application be reversed and that the Minister decline granting the concession to Westpower.

Date: 9 November 10, 2016



# Submission on Westpower Ltd's Hydroelectric Proposal for the Waitaha River

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24 October 2016

Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

Attention: Pauline Adams

Dear Director-General

I oppose Westpower Ltd's proposal to place a hydroelectric power generation scheme on the Waitaha river.

I have made many treasured visits to the Waitaha valley, and was privileged to have been one of the three kayakers who made the first successful descent of the Morgan gorge in February 2010.

**The Waitaha river is a world-class whitewater gem:** An expedition down the Waitaha river (for an accomplished whitewater kayaker) is equivalent to climbing Aoraki/Mount Cook (for a top-level mountaineer). The Waitaha river has now been kayaked from Stag creek above Windhover gorge down to the river flats below Morgan gorge. Morgan Gorge is the final crux of this classic river trip. It provides technical difficulties and fabulous whitewater in a stunning location. Morgan gorge used to be portaged (walked around) by kayakers until the first successful descent of the gorge in 2010 (21/02/2010). To date, it remains a test-piece of world-class whitewater. Over the past 2 decades we have witnessed dramatic increases in both skill level and equipment standards, such that the number of kayakers paddling water that was previously thought to be of extreme difficulty is constantly on the increase. To date, no kayaker has linked all sections of the Waitaha river together in a continuous ("source to sea") trip. Once achieved, this will make one of the most incredible extreme whitewater kayak trips in the world.

**New Zealand natural heritage at its best:** The Waitaha river valley (and surrounding area) is one of the most stunning places in New Zealand. For trampers, hunters and all those who are searching for a beautiful wilderness trip, the Waitaha valley provides incredible river, bush and high alpine scenery. The noise of Morgan Gorge and tantalizing glimpses of the river along this section of the track (especially when traversing the swing bridge above the entrance to Morgan gorge) provide the first awe-inspiring impressions of this trip.

**Westpower's concessions are meaningless:** Westpower agrees that the impact on the environment for both people visiting the valley on foot and with kayaks is considerable. They are proposing to build an ugly (see proposed plans on Westpower's website, <http://www.westpower.co.nz/news/article/application-concessions-and-assessment-effects>) concrete damn and collection system which leaves the Morgan gorge and a considerable section of the Waitaha river below the gorge dry (3 cumecs will disappear below the river bed rocks). They state that they will build a weir that can be safely negotiated by kayak. However, the "no take days" are proposed to be limited to 2 days a year. As a minimum we would require no take days of Friday to Monday (inclusive) throughout the summer months. And in addition, a hidden / natural looking weir and collection system.

**Do we need more electricity generation on the West Coast?:** We are lucky in New Zealand to be able to provide primarily sustainable energy. However, we already have a surplus of electricity on the West Coast. The proposed hydroelectricity generation scheme on the Arnold river has been deemed financially unviable in the current climate of low demand and low electricity prices. Therefore, Westpower's proposed scheme on the

Waitaha is of highly dubious community benefit. Even if we did need more hydroelectric generation schemes you don't intrude on one of our prime areas of wilderness DOC land and one of the most spectacular whitewater gorges in New Zealand to build it! There are many other (less precious) rivers from which electricity can be generated.

As humans steadily take over this planet there are fewer and fewer truly wild places. At present, New Zealand is fortunate to have remaining pockets of magnificent untouched wilderness. I believe that a huge part of the spirit of New Zealand resides in these unique wild places. We must stand strong in protecting them.

Of all of New Zealand's greatest wild rivers, the Waitaha deserves to be left to flow its natural course.

**Yours sincerely,**



**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 9 November 2016 6:05 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Submission Opposing the hydro scheme on the Waitaha River

November 9, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

**RE: Opposition to the proposed Hydro Scheme on the Waitaha River**

I am opposed and object to the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd. to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.

I request that the Minister of Conservation decline the application because:

The Morgan Gorge, a spectacular and dominating schist gorge separating the front country from the back country on the Waitaha River, is an outstanding natural feature in an outstanding natural landscape worthy of preservation and protection in its own right for the benefit of all of New Zealand.

The Waitaha River is a pristine riparian environment with outstanding wilderness and scenic values and is an exceptional Wild and Scenic river.

Fragile ecosystems, which include several species of threatened native flora and fauna, would be permanently destroyed if this proposal were implemented.

Westpower Ltd. has not adequately assessed the presence of these highly threatened species and has not given any assurance that the impacts on them can be properly avoided or mitigated.

The upper catchment of the Waitaha is highly valued for its sense of remoteness by trampers and hunters alike and is considered to be of international significance for kayakers. The development and dewatering of Morgan Gorge would ruin the mauri and mana of this magnificent wilderness taonga for current and future generations of New Zealanders and visitors from overseas.

Granting of the concessions is directly in conflict with the purpose of the Conservation Act and the Department of Conservation West Coast Conservation Management Strategy. The land required is currently classified as "stewardship" – a category created in 1987 by the Department of Conservation to hold land until its' conservation values could be assessed and given an appropriate level of protection.

The proposed hydro scheme is in direct conflict with the initial intent of stewardship land. It remains rather unfortunate that it has only been in very recent years that the Department of Conservation has started the wheels turning on working through and reclassifying conservation land.

The construction of an intake weir and adjacent access tunnel portal will be significant and contribute an unacceptable industrial intrusion into an otherwise pristine landscape on public conservation land. The proposal will have an irrevocable impact on the high natural values of this wild river.

The mitigation proposed by Westpower Ltd. cannot expiate for impacts of the intrusion of manmade structures and drastically reduced river flows on this wilderness landscape. Fundamental alteration of an outstanding wild and remote experience in the upper Waitaha to what will become a significantly modified and 'industrialised' environment is unacceptable and the application untenable.

An independent electricity industry expert has determined that power from the proposal is not needed for many years. There is no significant demand for extra power on the West Coast, and the National Grid has recently been upgraded to meet any foreseeable increased power demand on the West Coast.

Other more viable, likely cheaper, less destructive alternatives exist for power generation on the West Coast. Previously consented hydro proposals including schemes on the Arnold River and at Stockton are available to develop. There is no justification for the destruction of such an outstanding natural wilderness feature within public conservation estate on power supply grounds.

Under the Conservation Act section 17U, the Minister of Conservation can only give permission to build and operate a hydroelectric scheme on the conservation estate if it:

1. Would not compromise the purposes for which the land is held 2. Could not reasonably be done elsewhere, including in another conservation area where the effects would be less significant.

In my own words, the West Coast holds a special place in my heart and soul, and always will. The value of my outdoor experiences in this part of the world is unquantifiable, and it is my dear hope that I can share this with my future children and family.

I have been to the Waitaha numerous times. I have climbed into Morgan Gorge along the rocks sculpted by years of raw power and fury of these breathtaking waters. I have clung to the trees that have fought for their place on the gorge walls. I have watched the water dance downstream, untapped and untamed; it's fury evident in the shaping of this place.

As someone who has spent my entire working life on the rivers of the world, it breaks my heart that the Waitaha could be given up, just like that.

Approximately 1% of the world's rivers still flow free and to have a place, just like this, sitting prettily tucked in on the most phenomenal parts of the world – we have a duty to protect and conserve it.

My work has taken me all over the world, and earlier this year, to Nepal. So many of their rivers are broken; they are full of rubbish and waste. Here, in our part of the world, we have rivers so clean you can drink from them. You visit the Waitaha, you drink from the Waitaha, you become part of the Waitaha and the Waitaha becomes part of you.

As outlined above, this proposal directly compromises any conservation values of this land. Furthermore, the range of real and viable alternatives to this proposed hydroelectric development is very broad as all power stations across the country are connected through the national grid.

The decision to grant the concessions in principle should be reversed for many reasons, including a number mentioned above, and the application for concession declined.

I wish to be heard in support of my submission.

Sincerely,

Lucy Croft

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**From:** I  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 9 November 2016 9:34 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Submission on Westpower Waitaha river concession

Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

Attention: Pauline Adams

Dear Sir/Madam

I am opposed to the application by Westpower Limited for a Lease, Easement and License for a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River.

I request that the Minister of Conservation decline the Application.

I oppose the application because:

1. The proposal takes a public good for private benefit: this proposal takes conservation and recreation values for Westpower's benefit without providing a public benefit, since the public does not need its electricity as there is other consented generation which would not take public good.
2. The proposal destroys habitat of threatened native species of bat, bird, and gecko.
3. The proposal damages the outstanding natural landscape of the Waitaha river and Morgan gorge.

Yours faithfully



**CONSERVATION ACT 1987 SECTION 17Q****SUBMISSION/OBJECTION ON/TO AN INTENTION TO GRANT CONCESSIONS**

**TO:** Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

**Attention:** Pauline Adams,

**SUBMITTER:****ADDRESS FOR SERVICE:****CONCESSION APPLICANT DETAILS:**

**Applicant's name:** Westpower Limited

**Proposal:** Waitaha Hydro Scheme

**Details of application:**

The applicant wishes to obtain a concession to construct, maintain and operate a run-of-the-river hydro scheme at the Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River on Department of Conservation (DOC) stewardship land. Westpower propose to take water off through a highly visible weir across the river and tunnel entrance located in the rock face on the true right bank at the start of the Morgan Gorge. This structure and an adjacent access tunnel portal will be significant industrial intrusions into an otherwise pristine landscape and environment. The scheme proposes to take much of the flow of the river (up to 23 cumecs, river median flow (50% of the time) is 19 cumecs) and leave a residual flow of 3.5 cumecs in the Morgan Gorge at all times – higher and flood flows will still travel down the Morgan Gorge when the proposed Westpower take is exceeded. The water is returned to the river about 2.5 km downstream of the intake via a powerhouse on the north bank of the river.

The reach of the Waitaha River that is of particular concern with respect to the current requested concession is from the powerhouse site upstream to the headwaters of the Waitaha River, and including the Morgan Gorge.

## **SUBMISSION/OBJECTION:**

**I oppose and object to the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.**

**I wish to be heard in support of this submission**

### **Introduction**

*The Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River, and the Upper Waitaha River including the Waitaha and Windhover Gorges and catchment to the main divide constitute an outstanding wild and scenic river, with outstanding natural beauty, scenery and wilderness values, and outstanding kayaking values for expert and developing kayakers. The Morgan Gorge and the upper Waitaha River runs represent the pinnacle of white water runs for the most skilled of expert kayakers. Therefore, like their exemplars of other outstanding beginner, intermediate, advanced and expert white water runs water throughout the country, some of which are protected by Water Conservation Orders, this river warrants the same statutory recognition and protection.*

*The proposed Westpower hydro scheme will have a number of significant impacts on the values of the Morgan Gorge, the river above, and a section of the river below the Morgan Gorge, that are currently used by kayakers and other back country recreation users.*

### **Request Declining the Granting of the Concession**

**I request that the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River be reversed and that the concession not be granted as the proposed development:**

- **I do not support the degradation of our pristine and wild rivers here in New Zealand. We have a number of acute issues facing our water bodies here in New Zealand. Many of our waterways are highly modified, drained or are now severely polluted. It is actually time we take steps to preserve those which we can be proud of, and work to rehabilitate the others.**
- **The Waitaha is a truly magical place. I have been many places in the world as a kayaker and the river gorges on the West Coast are among the most spectacular places I have visited. It is not possible to explain the experience one gets when you are able to recreate in them. It's a true wilderness experience like no other. It will not be possible to have this same holistic experience when the river has been modified for the purposes of power generation.**
- **The development will severely impact the natural character of this river.**
- **This development certainly is not compatible with the outstanding natural feature (ONF) status of the Morgan Gorge and outstanding natural landscape (ONL) status of the Waitaha River from the bottom of the Morgan Gorge to the headwaters and values of the stewardship land involved**
- **The development is incompatible with the purpose of the Conservation Act, and**

especially with respect to the purpose of DOC stewardship land

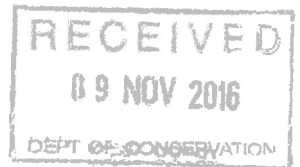
- It is not needed for the power it will generate, nor would it provide for greater reliability of power distribution for the West Coast
- It is contrary to various Objectives and Policies in Regional and District Plans and the West Coast Conservation Management Strategy
- It will prevent current recreational users and particularly kayakers from accessing the Morgan Gorge and a river reach below.
- It will severely impinge and intrude on the outstanding kayaking, white water, wilderness and landscape values of a wild and scenic West Coast river. The proposed scheme will have a significant adverse effect on the outstanding kayaking values in the river. Such issues are not properly addressed in the application
- The mitigation offered if the scheme goes ahead is not sufficient, workable, or appropriate. This concession without appropriate consent conditions will effectively stop kayakers using the resource, not just in the Morgan Gorge but elsewhere in the catchment, where no mitigation is provided
- New Zealand is swamped with power generation, there are plenty of other less damaging consented power schemes and infrastructure on the West Coast available to provide power, MBIE say we don't need the power, so if this extra generation is not needed why ruin the beautiful wild Waitaha River?
- It really does not make sense, there is no need to destroy this pristine wilderness river for the sake of power generation that is not needed, don't do it!

For these reasons I ask that the decision on the concession application be reversed and that the Minister decline granting the concession to Westpower.

**Date:** November 10, 2016







1047

To: Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

Attention: Pauline Adams

From: .

6/11/16

Submission in regard to Westpower's proposed hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.

Dear Department of Conservation,

I am opposed to this scheme at this point in time. The scheme will have a major impact on the wild character of the Morgan gorge. This would only be justifiable if the region was short of power, and it was not possible to proceed with an upgraded hydro scheme on the Arnold River. Until these two circumstances pertain, then I submit that the proposed Waitaha hydro scheme should not be permitted to proceed.

Yours sincerely,



**CONSERVATION ACT 1987 SECTION 170****SUBMISSION/OBJECTION ON/TO AN INTENTION TO GRANT CONCESSIONS**

**TO:** Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

**Attention:** Pauline Adams, [permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)

**SUBMITTER:**

**ADDRESS FOR SERVICE:**

**CONCESSION APPLICANT DETAILS:**

**Applicant's name:** Westpower Limited

**Proposal:** Waitaha Hydro Scheme

**Details of application:**

The applicant wishes to obtain a concession to construct, maintain and operate a run-of-the-river hydro scheme at the Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River on Department of Conservation (DOC) stewardship land. Westpower propose to take water off through a highly visible weir across the river and tunnel entrance located in the rock face on the true right bank at the start of the Morgan Gorge. This structure and an adjacent access tunnel portal will be significant industrial intrusions into an otherwise pristine landscape and environment. The scheme proposes to take much of the flow of the river (up to 23 cumecs, river median flow (50% of the time) is 19 cumecs) and leave a residual flow of 3.5 cumecs in the Morgan Gorge at all times – higher and flood flows will still travel down the Morgan Gorge when the proposed Westpower take is exceeded. The water is returned to the river about 2.5 km downstream of the intake via a powerhouse on the north bank of the river.

The reach of the Waitaha River that is of particular concern with respect to the current requested concession is from the powerhouse site upstream to the headwaters of the Waitaha



River, and including the Morgan Gorge.

**SUBMISSION/OBJECTION:**

**I oppose and object to the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.**

**I wish to be heard in support of this submission.**

**Introduction**

The Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River, and the Upper Waitaha River including the Waitaha and Windhover Gorges and catchment to the main divide constitute an outstanding wild and scenic river, with outstanding natural beauty, scenery and wilderness values, and outstanding kayaking values for expert and developing kayakers. The Morgan Gorge and the upper Waitaha River runs represent the pinnacle of white water runs for the most skilled of expert kayakers. Therefore, like their exemplars of other rivers of outstanding wilderness, scenery and recreational values throughout the country, some of which are protected by Water Conservation Orders, this river warrants the same statutory recognition and protection.

The proposed Westpower hydro scheme will have a number of significant impacts on the values of the Morgan Gorge, the river above, and a section of the river below the Morgan Gorge, that are currently used by kayakers and other back country recreation users, and represent a true piece of wild and natural New Zealand.

**Request Declining the Granting of the Concession**

**I request that the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River be reversed and that the concession not be granted as the proposed development:**

- will impact severely on the natural feature and wilderness and scenic values of the spectacular, powerful, majestic, water carved, fluted, schist rock Morgan Gorge, which separates the upper wild and scenic Waitaha back country catchment from the front country, as well as the whole catchment.
- is incompatible with the outstanding natural feature (ONF) status of the Morgan Gorge and outstanding natural landscape (ONL) status of the Waitaha River from the bottom of the Morgan Gorge to the headwaters and values of the stewardship land involved
- is incompatible with the purpose of the Conservation Act, and especially with respect to the purpose of DOC stewardship land
- will destroy the natural character of an intrinsically wild and outstanding natural river. that is of cultural significance to many New Zealanders.
- is not needed for the power it will generate, as determined by an independent economist, due to the excess of power available in New Zealand and the lack of significant business development on the West Coast.



- is contrary to various Objectives and Policies in Regional and District Plans and the West Coast Conservation Management Strategy
- will prevent current recreational users and particularly kayakers from accessing the Morgan Gorge and a river reach below
- will severely impinge and intrude on the outstanding kayaking, white water, wilderness and landscape values of a wild and scenic West Coast river. The proposed scheme will have a significant adverse effect on the outstanding kayaking values in the river. Such issues are not properly addressed in the application
- will severely destroy or damage the natural ecosystem, which is home to many indigenous and endangered native species. Of particular concern is the self-sustaining population of whio living within the gorge. Other species of concern include two species of endangered lizards, long-tailed bats, and several nationally vulnerable and important species such as the NZ falcon, Kaka, Kea and Kereru (NZ wood pigeon).
- the mitigation offered if the scheme goes ahead is not sufficient, workable, or appropriate. This concession without appropriate consent conditions will irreversibly and adversely alter the natural character and ecological health of the rivers and surrounds, in addition to severely impacting on recreational activities in the area. The mitigation is extremely minimal in comparison to the losses, and not appropriate given the value of the Waitaha River.
- is not the most suitable scheme to serve the purpose intended. Westpower intends that the Waitaha hydro scheme will provide greater reliability of power to the West Coast. However, this argument is not valid as there are already other unbuilt, yet fully consented power schemes on the West Coast, in closer proximity to areas with major power usage. These schemes are much less damaging and have higher financial returns.

In conclusion, I believe that the Waitaha hydro scheme is completely unnecessary and will irreversibly destroy the natural character of the river, and its associated wilderness, recreational, cultural and ecological values. Furthermore does not align with the Conservation Act, or the values we hold as New Zealanders.

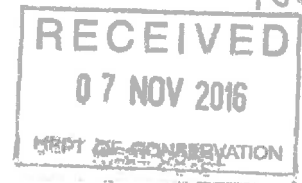
For these reasons I ask that the decision on the concession application be reversed and that the Minister decline granting the concession to Westpower.

Date: October 30, 2016





1050



Submission to: Director-General  
The Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

Attention: Ms Pauline Adams

Re: Proposed Waitaha river power scheme

From:

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016

The Morgan Gorge at the head of the Waitaha Valley is an outstanding beautiful natural landscape with impressive schist gorge and water worn sculptured rock walls. My husband and I have spent several adventurous years visiting, exploring and enjoying. It is the perfect habitat for blue ducks (Whio) which are nationally vulnerable species and faces a risk of becoming extinct.

We feel that this precious valley is best left untouched. To have a 2km access road, powerhouse and tunnel will definitely alter this wild pristine valley. Other valleys in this region may have similar geological features but that in no way lessens the ecological and tourist value of the Waitaha and Morgan Gorge.

There are less invasive ways to generate electricity eg Solar, wind or using technology to extract energy eg producing methane from landfill waste.

We struggle to understand why an unaltered landscape becomes the focus for so much development when there are high wind exposed plateaus (previously mined with roading access, and no longer containing ecological value) that could offer massive potential for wind farming le Mt Davy, Stockton and Denniston etc.

With the emphasis on clean and green sustainable energy we feel the Waitaha river power scheme is not indicative of NZ trade mark image.

Tourists come to NZ for our unique unspoiled wilderness.

This valley may in future become more visited if promoted with its:

- untouched beauty
- geological features with its impressive schist gorge

- hot spring
- challenging kayaking,
- tramping up to Ivory Lake glacier
- access to huts, mountains and ridges
- home to New Zealanders unique blue duck.

**Signed:**

**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 November 2016 11:06 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Attention: Pauline Adams

I feel a personal attachment to the Waitaha valley having spent many days tramping and climbing in its catchment. Damming it will be an unforgivable waste of our countries remaining wilderness, an asset more important to me, and a large number of New Zealanders, than unnecessary electricity, especially when other less destructive generation options are available.

Our countries remaining wilderness is finite, and very limited, and holds an intangible importance beyond the possible economic gains available from its exploitation.

The protection of these wilderness areas from development should be docs main concern. Allowing this sort of outdated slash and burn molestation is a criminal misuse of power, and spits in the face of the trust New Zealanders have placed in doc to preserve our countries national park land. Our national parks are not for doc to sell off piece by piece to the highest bidder. Shame on you.

Yours,



**CONSERVATION ACT 1987 SECTION 17Q****SUBMISSION/OBJECTION ON/TO AN INTENTION TO GRANT CONCESSIONS**

**TO:** Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

**Attention:** Pauline Adams, [permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)

**SUBMITTER:**

**ADDRESS FOR SERVICE:**

**CONCESSION APPLICANT DETAILS:**

**Applicant's name:** Westpower Limited

**Proposal:** Waitaha Hydro Scheme

**Details of application:**

The applicant wishes to obtain a concession to construct, maintain and operate a run-of-the-river hydro scheme at the Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River on Department of Conservation (DOC) stewardship land. Westpower propose to take water off through a highly visible weir across the river and tunnel entrance located in the rock face on the true right bank at the start of the Morgan Gorge. This structure and an adjacent access tunnel portal will be significant industrial intrusions into an otherwise pristine landscape and environment. The scheme proposes to take much of the flow of the river (up to 23 cumecs, river median flow (50% of the time) is 19 cumecs) and leave a residual flow of 3.5 cumecs in the Morgan Gorge at all times – higher and flood flows will still travel down the Morgan Gorge when the proposed Westpower take is exceeded. The water is returned to the river about 2.5 km downstream of the intake via a powerhouse on the north bank of the river.

The reach of the Waitaha River that is of particular concern with respect to the current requested concession is from the powerhouse site upstream to the headwaters of the Waitaha River, and

Including the Morgan Gorge.

**SUBMISSION/OBJECTION:**

**We oppose and object to the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.**

**We ask that the decision on the concession application be reversed and that the Minister decline granting the concession to Westpower.**

**We wish to be heard in support of this submission.**

**Introduction**

The Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River, and the Upper Waitaha River including the Waitaha and Windhover Gorges and catchment to the main divide constitute an outstanding wild and scenic river, with outstanding natural beauty, scenery and wilderness values, and outstanding kayaking values for expert and developing kayakers. The Morgan Gorge and the upper Waitaha River runs represent the pinnacle of white water runs for the most skilled of expert kayakers. Therefore, like their exemplars of other outstanding beginner, intermediate, advanced and expert white water runs water throughout the country, some of which are protected by Water Conservation Orders, this river warrants the same statutory recognition and protection.

The proposed Westpower hydro scheme will have a number of significant impacts on the values of the Morgan Gorge, the river above, and a section of the river below the Morgan Gorge, that are currently used by kayakers and other back country recreation users.

**Kayaking, River Running and River Background**

We are now 63 years old. We and our children \_\_\_\_\_, have enjoyed kayaking, rafting, cataracting and river bugging on rivers throughout our lives in New Zealand and in different parts of the world. For us this has been over the past forty five years after we starting kayaking in canvas canoes at university. We still actively run rivers.

I ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) have been lucky enough to paddle on many of the classic white water runs throughout New Zealand, many in remote areas only accessible by helicopter or fixed wing aircraft (such as the Ngaruroro, Mohaka, Tongariro, Karamea, Mokihinui, Buller, Clarence, Hokitika, Whitcombe, Whataroa, Landsborough and Walatoto), and up to a Class IV level. I have kayaked and cataracted the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River and other classic wild and scenic rivers in Oregon and Washington in the USA and in Europe in France, Austria, Germany, Switzerland. I have kayaked the outstanding Franklin River in Tasmania in a world heritage area. I am a life member of the University of Canterbury Canoe Club, a member of the Whitewater Canoe Club and the BugSports Club both in Christchurch, have held many office bearer positions on the Committees of these clubs, and am currently the Conservation Officer for Whitewater NZ.

Over the years I ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) have presented expert kayaking and scientific (I am a chemist) evidence at many planning, resource consent, and Water Conservation Order, and Environment Court hearings on behalf of river runners and primarily kayakers, supported by Rosemary and our family. Ever since

we have paddled we have had a strong involvement in the conservation of the valued resources that we rely on for our activities. Having traveled and paddled overseas we have seen first-hand and are aware of the tragedy of the loss of such resources in many countries, particularly through hydro development (such as the Coruh in Turkey, the Bloblo in Chile and the Marañon (source of the Amazon) now under threat in Peru), which has given us a heightened appreciation and awareness of the many outstanding rivers we have in New Zealand. I (Doug) have been and still am actively involved in quantifying New Zealand's most valued paddling rivers and their different values and what is required to protect them, and protecting the best examples of them for posterity, particularly through Water Conservation Orders.

### **The Waitaha River**

The Waitaha River in its upper reaches is a pristine outstanding wild and scenic river on the West Coast of the South Island. It contains a number of the hardest high Class most technically difficult white water kayaking runs in New Zealand, in an outstanding natural landscape (ONL) and has a relatively reliable water flow. The runs include the upper Waitaha, the Windhover Gorge, the Waitaha Gorge, the Morgan Gorge, and a reach just below the Morgan Gorge.

The Morgan Gorge, which is a spectacular schist gorge separating the back-country from the front-country, and an outstanding natural feature (ONF) in its own right, is a part of this resource. As a result, this river stands as a pinnacle of white water rivers in New Zealand for the most competent of expert kayakers. It is known and valued by both New Zealand and International paddlers.

The values of the different runs and the standing of the river in the New Zealand context are described more fully in the Whitewater NZ submission<sup>1</sup>. The Waitaha River and the Hokitika River and her tributaries are two of the best outstanding and most valued rivers providing high Class technically difficult white water in the country. Like their lower Class (less difficult) rivers with outstanding kayaking values - such as the Buller and tributaries such as the Gowan, Mangles, Matiri Maruia and Matakītaki, the Shotover and Kawarau, Rangitata, Hurunui, Ngaruroro, Motu, and Rangitikei - some of which have Water Conservation Orders on them recognizing these values, the Waitaha and Hokitika Rivers are deserving of the same recognition and protection.

### **Impacts of the Proposed Westpower Hydro Scheme**

The proposed scheme will have significant impacts on the wilderness and recreation values of the pristine Morgan Gorge and whole upper catchment that are understated and misrepresented by the applicant and their consultants. Many of its impacts cannot be mitigated, as is discussed in depth in the Whitewater NZ submission (footnote 1). The scheme will totally remove the ability of kayakers to run the Morgan Gorge and the reach below the Morgan Gorge down to the proposed powerhouse. The latter is used by kayakers paddling the Morgan Gorge, or the Waitaha Gorge after portaging the Morgan Gorge, or accessed as a separate run from the road end. It will destroy the intact wilderness of the upper Catchment, the mauri (life force) and natural white water features in the Morgan Gorge, and place intrusive industrial structures and signage paraphernalia in various parts of the Catchment totally out of keeping with such a highly natural environment.

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<sup>1</sup> D A Rankin, Submission/objection on/to an intention to grant concessions to Westpower for the Waitaha hydro scheme, Whitewater NZ, November 2016

Mitigation that is proposed is often inadequate, inappropriate, not adequately defined in many cases, and unworkable in many areas, and missing in other areas where it should be provided.

There is no need for the power and yet the applicant wants a concession, to make money (so it claims; there are serious questions as to scheme's likely financial viability) at New Zealand's natural capital's expense and the New Zealand and international community's expense (at various levels of tourism, recreation, wilderness, natural untouched environmental and conservation values).

The scheme is inconsistent with the reasons why the land is held and its designation under the Conservation Act, the fact that the Morgan Gorge is an ONF in an ONL, various plans and the DOC West Coast Conservation Management Strategy and RMA law, and other DOC concession precedents, as is discussed more in depth in the Whitewater NZ submission (footnote 1).

#### **Impacts on Values Important to Myself and Many New Zealanders**

I (        will most likely never kayak any of the runs on the Waitaha River, much as I would like to run the beautiful Waitaha Gorge, as will be the case for most New Zealanders. I have left my run too late. I have flown over parts of the Catchment in a helicopter (below the Morgan Gorge to as far up as Lake Ivory and the Ivory Hut) and landed at Kiwi Flat, the entrance to the Morgan Gorge and below the Morgan Gorge. It is one of the few rivers that I have seen from the air that I could recognize as having outstanding natural topography, geomorphology, schist gorges, waterfalls, water course and wilderness values. Normally when flying up rivers it is hard to readily discern such values. Images in Whitewater NZ's evidence attest to these values (footnote 1).

However, the knowledge that the best of these wild magical places exist in New Zealand and (hopefully) remain intact for some to explore and experience and are kept for future generations to enjoy, to physically challenge those that can and dare run them or simply visit them or know of their existence, to remind us of the power of nature, and to refresh our spirits, is vital to the essence of our lives and that of many New Zealanders.

What is left of our untouched natural environment is what makes New Zealand an outstanding country to live in and as a tourist destination for domestic and overseas tourists, and those remaining outstanding natural assets and environments should be looked after very well and not squandered needlessly. New Zealanders assume such valued places are looked after by DOC, which it is charged with doing so under the Conservation Act.

It seems to us DOC has either lost its way in its current decision to grant, in principle, Westpower a concession, or has become the pawn of political agendas or whims in even considering the current Westpower hydro proposal. It makes no sense to us to permit development or abstraction (of water) on one of the best examples of our wild and scenic rivers and natural environments held under the Conservation Act in any case. It seems somewhat questionable for DOC to have even let Westpower consider and develop their proposal for construction on the DOC Estate and spend the money they have to date. To grant a concession for such a development when the power is not even needed is even more perverse.

Dr Jan Wright<sup>2</sup> has eloquently written on the need to do better and favour protection of our

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<sup>2</sup> Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment.



remaining wild and scenic rivers over further hydro development, and for DOC to more appropriately manage stewardship land, and has suggested guidelines to rectify both situations. DOC and Westpower, and its consultants, do not seem to have appreciated this landscape or have ignored it or have not acted on it and so we are potentially all the poorer for it.

#### **Request Declining the Granting of the Concession**

We request that the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River be reversed and that the concession not be granted as the proposed development:

- will impact severely on the natural feature and wilderness and scenic values of the spectacular, powerful, majestic, water carved, fluted, schist rock Morgan Gorge, which separates the upper wild and scenic Waitaha back country catchment from the front country, as well as the whole catchment
- is incompatible with the outstanding natural feature (ONF) status of the Morgan Gorge and outstanding natural landscape (ONL) status of the Waitaha River from the bottom of the Morgan Gorge to the headwaters and values of the stewardship land involved
- is incompatible with the purpose of the Conservation Act and is ignoring the recommendations of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, and especially with respect to the purpose and management of DOC stewardship land
- is not needed for the power it will generate, nor would it provide for greater reliability of power distribution for the West Coast; purported reasons for its development
- is contrary to various Objectives and Policies in Regional and District Plans and the DOC West Coast Conservation Management Strategy
- will prevent current recreational users and particularly kayakers from accessing the Morgan Gorge and a river reach below
- will severely impinge and intrude on the outstanding kayaking, white water, wilderness and landscape values of a wild and scenic West Coast river. The proposed scheme will have a significant adverse effect on the outstanding kayaking values in the river. Such issues are not properly addressed in the application
- does not have sufficient, workable, or appropriate mitigation offered if the scheme goes ahead. This concession without appropriate consent conditions will effectively stop kayakers using the resource, not just in the Morgan Gorge but elsewhere in the catchment, where no mitigation is provided
- is contrary to common sense. New Zealand is swamped with power generation, there are plenty of other less damaging consented power schemes and infrastructure on the West Coast available to provide power, MBIE say we don't need the power, so if this extra generation is not needed why ruin the beautiful wild Waitaha River?
- is contrary to precedents set in the decision to decline the Fiordland Link monorail proposal concession.

**For these reasons we ask that the decision on the concession application be reversed and that the Minister decline granting the concession to Westpower.**

**For DOC to permit this development would be an environmental travesty even if there was a power need, but far worse when there is none. DOC's primary role is to look after the Conservation Estate not permit development on it, unless it is not inappropriate on the Conservation Estate. This development is clearly not appropriate at many levels, and therefore the concession application must be declined.**

**Please Minister, act as we have requested and provide some firm leadership and direction and let common sense prevail.**

**Date: November 11, 2016**

**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 November 2016 10:37 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** RE: waitaha river dam

my name is .thanks.i will put the submission in on my own behalf

On 11/11/2016 10:28 AM, "Permissions Hokitika" <[permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)> wrote:

Hi there. In order for me to register your support I will need your names, emailing them is fine.

Thanks,

*Lucy Croft*

*Statutory Support Officer*

*Private Bag 701 Hokitika*

*Department of Conservation- Te Papa Atawhai*

*Conservation leadership of our nature- Tākina te hī, Tiakina, te hā o te Āo Tūroa*

**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 10 November 2016 6:49 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika <[permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)>  
**Subject:** waitaha river dam

I have an interest in a dairy farm at reefton and i and my co oweners would like to give our support to the proposed riverrun dam at waitaha.

Caution - This message and accompanying data may contain information that is confidential or subject to legal privilege. If you are not the intended recipient you are notified that any use, dissemination, distribution or copying of this message or data is prohibited. If you received this email in error, please notify us immediately and erase all copies of the message and attachments. We apologise for the inconvenience. Thank you.



**Lucy Croft**

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**From:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 November 2016 9:47 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggle.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Attention: Pauline Adams

I am opposed to the application by Westpower Limited for a Lease, Easement and License for a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River.

I request that the Minister of Conservation decline the Application.

I oppose the application because: The proposal does not meet the purpose of the Conservation Act.

The proposal will have an irrevocable impact on the high natural values of this wild river. The mitigation proposed by Westpower will not mitigate the impacts of the intrusion of manmade structures and altered river flows on this landscape.

This is a truly wild river and its intrinsic character that includes the native flora and fauna would be permanently destroyed by imposing a hydro scheme on public conservation land.

The impacts on these values include:

The intrinsic nature of the magnificent undisturbed river in South Westland.  
 The Waitaha is an unobstructed wild river.

There is wide agreement that it is an outstanding natural landscape.

The Morgan Gorge is an outstanding natural feature and one of the most spectacular gorges in the country.

The construction of a weir and associated infrastructure close to where the Waitaha enters the gorge will have an entirely unacceptable and inappropriate impact on the overwhelming naturalness of this special place.

The upper catchment of the Waitaha It is highly valued for its sense of remoteness by trampers and hunters alike and is considered to be of international significance for kayakers.

There is no mitigation measures that can compensate for the change from an outstanding wild and remote experience in the upper Waitaha to what will become a significantly modified and 'industrialised' environment as a result of the reduced river flow, weir and associated infrastructure.

The values of the Waitaha are important in and of itself.

Effects on significant flora and fauna habitat:

The permanent loss of 3.5 ha of native forest with a reduction in the intactness of the vegetation.

The removal of vegetation as a result of the proposal will cause the permanent loss of habitat for of lizard species at risk of extinction, including the green and forest gecko.

Westpower has not adequately assessed the presence of these highly threatened species and have not given any assurance that the impacts on them can be properly avoided or mitigated.

The proposal will result in the destruction of these nationally important species, any loss therefore is significant. Westpower has identified 27 native bird species with the hydro footprint, including a number of threatened native bird species. These include kaka, falcon and whio.

Westpower notes that western weka are recorded in the catchment. Western weka are genetically distinct from other populations of weka north of the Waitaha catchment. There is insufficient information about the impacts of the resident whio population, including the importance of the Morgan Gorge to them. There can be no confidence that Westpower is able to avoid, remedy or mitigate impacts on this iconic species, including the impacts of construction and the dewatering of the Morgan Gorge.

The long tailed bat is present within the footprint. The clearance of habitat and tree felling will result in loss of both their breeding and feeding habitat and has the potential to cause the death of bats. This is an entirely unacceptable and inappropriate risk and one that cannot be adequately mitigated for.

Furthermore, there are already other alternatives for hydro generation on the West Coast. There are already consented proposals for hydro including the schemes on the Arnold River and at Stockton. There is no case for further hydro generation that justifies the destruction of such a wild and special place.

I have tramped the Waitaha River as part of a South Westland kiwi survey for DOC and was particularly impressed with the high level of natural character, scenic quality, and wildlife habitat of the Waitaha including the Kiwi Flat area. Blue duck (whio), a threatened species with a highly specialised torrent habitat is present in the gorges around Kiwi Flat and would be seriously affected by any form of dam or weir that altered the natural white water character of the area.

For this reason the hydro proposal is just as inappropriate for the Waitaha as it was for the Mokihinui. What is more, the original proposal by TrustPower for supplementing the Arnold River Scheme with dams in highly modified tributary catchments is glaringly obviously a far more responsible proposal for increasing West Coast generation capacity than that proposed for the Waitaha.

Yours,

**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 November 2016 7:59 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Attention: Pauline Adams

I am opposed to the application by Westpower Limited for a Lease, Easement and License for a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River.

I request that the Minister of Conservation decline the Application

I go tramping a lot on the West Coast and these rivers are remote and unspoiled, and represent a significant part of the 1% of unmodified rivers in the world. The Morgan gorge on the Waitaha is incredibly beautiful and spectacular and should be valued as such, even though (or because?) it is rarely visited. Once modified it will be lost for ever.

Thanks,

John  
Yours,





**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 November 2016 4:51 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** Waitaka

Hi Guys,

I am a part time Kiwi (5 months a year) the rest of the time I'm a UK resident. The UK at present, particularly in the South East, is an area growing out of all proportion to the roads, the schools, the amenities generally and is soaking up massive areas of the countryside for housing. In many cases there is the opportunity to not take over countryside as there are other options, regeneration of ex industrial sites etc. Please don't let Morgan gorge be another beautiful pristine untouched area absorbed into un-needed electricity production. NZ is a magical place with magical recreational resources which is the core of its attraction to tourism please, please don't needlessly wreck it, it cannot be recreated!

Regards



**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 November 2016 1:43 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Attention: Pauline Adams

I am opposed to the application by Westpower Limited for a Lease, Easement and License for a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River.

After reading through the DOC report on this proposal

([http://www.doc.govt.nz/pagefiles/164710/notified\\_concession\\_officers\\_report\\_westpower.pdf](http://www.doc.govt.nz/pagefiles/164710/notified_concession_officers_report_westpower.pdf))

I am extremely disappointed that this has been allowed to get to this point.

There is no need for this scheme, it is a waste of resources and a waste of an amazing environmental asset.

This wilderness area is worth more than any electricity scheme, particularly an unwarranted one.

It is clear that the mitigation proposed by Westpower will not mitigate the impacts of the intrusion of manmade structures and altered river flows on this landscape. This is evident from the discussions already attempted with the white water community, where Westpower argue for the bare minimum of no-take days and make the process cumbersome and difficult. Those who use the river should have absolute priority over an unnecessary scheme like this, yet it is clear that Westpower do not have any interest in preserving this resource for river users, if they did then the process of no take days and the number would be wildly different.

In fact, there is no mitigation measures that can compensate for the change from an outstanding wild and remote experience in the upper Waitaha to what will become a significantly modified and 'industrialised' environment as a result of the reduced river flow, weir and associated infrastructure.

This is a truly wild river and its intrinsic character that includes the native flora and fauna would be permanently destroyed by imposing a hydro scheme on public conservation land.

The construction of a weir and associated infrastructure close to where the Waitaha enters the gorge will have an entirely unacceptable and inappropriate impact on the overwhelming naturalness of this special place.

Finally, there are already other alternatives for hydro power in the surrounding area, with consented proposals on the Arnold River and at Stockton. It makes no sense to grant consent on the Waitaha.

I request that the Minister of Conservation please decline the Application.

Regards,

Yours,



**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 10 November 2016 11:40 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Attention: Pauline Adams

I am opposed to the application by Westpower Limited for a Lease, Easement and License for a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River.

I request that the Minister of Conservation decline the Application.

I oppose the application because:

The impact on the hot springs in the Morgan Gorge and their recreational use has not been fully acknowledged. The hot springs have been described as 'inaccessible' in the recent reports despite the fact that three editions of the guidebook 'Hot Springs of New Zealand' as well as the website 'nzhotpools.co.nz' give directions on how to reach these springs as a day hike. I've personally visited these hot springs many times and know of dozens of people who have also visited. Without exception, people are mesmerized by the awe-inspiring location of these hot springs. I've visited most of New Zealand's hot springs and those in the Morgan Gorge are some of the most unique and outstanding. Far more people have bathed in these springs than will ever kayak this extremely beautiful but challenging gorge. Fluctuating water levels in the Morgan Gorge would compromise the soaking opportunities at these pools and put bathers at risk of being swept into the river which would result in almost certain death.

The recent reports mention that there is already public access up the true right of the Waitaha River which is the side Westpower also wants to access.

Up until about seven years ago the public foot access was on the true left.

The new true right access is longer and rougher than the old true left access despite the fact that the latter hadn't been maintained for many years. The reason cited by DOC for the new track was that there were access issues with the landowners on the true right. Perhaps there was a misunderstanding as I was told in person by David Beckham of PD Farms that DOC never contacted him about coming up with a solution such as putting the access to the true left of the river down his fence-line instead of across his paddocks. The new Waitaha Valley foot access on the true right has been receiving ongoing flood damage ever since it was created. The beginning of the new track is largely confined to the riverbed as the DOC signs state that this farmer doesn't want hikers on his land (but he's going to be okay with Westpower crossing it?).

According to the DOC website this new route is no longer maintained. It's quite possible that public access could return to the true true left which is shorter and requires less maintenance.

The proposal does not meet the purpose of the Conservation Act.

The proposal will have an irrevocable impact on the high natural values of this wild river. The mitigation proposed by Westpower will not mitigate the impacts of the intrusion of manmade structures and altered river flows on this landscape.

This is a truly wild river and its intrinsic character that includes the native flora and fauna would be permanently destroyed by imposing a hydro scheme on public conservation land.

The impacts on these values include:

The intrinsic nature of the magnificent undisturbed river in South Westland.  
 The Waitaha is an unobstructed wild river.

There is wide agreement that it is an outstanding natural landscape.

The Morgan Gorge is an outstanding natural feature and one of the most spectacular gorges in the country.

The construction of a weir and associated infrastructure close to where the Waitaha enters the gorge will have an entirely unacceptable and inappropriate impact on the overwhelming naturalness of this special place.

The upper catchment of the Waitaha It is highly valued for its sense of remoteness by trampers and hunters alike and is considered to be of international significance for kayakers.

There is no mitigation measures that can compensate for the change from an outstanding wild and remote experience in the upper Waitaha to what will be become a significantly modified and 'industrialised' environment as a result of the reduced river flow, weir and associated infrastructure.

The values of the Waitaha are important in and of itself.

Effects on significant flora and fauna habitat:

The permanent loss of 3.5 ha of native forest with a reduction in the intactness of the vegetation.

The removal of vegetation as a result of the proposal will cause the permanent loss of habitat for of lizard species at risk of extinction, including the green and forest gecko.

Westpower has not adequately assessed the presence of these highly threatened species and have not given any assurance that the impacts on them can be properly avoided or mitigated.

The proposal will result in the destruction of these nationally important species, any loss therefore is significant. Westpower has identified 27 native bird species with the hydro footprint, including a number of threatened native bird species. These include kaka, falcon and whio.

Westpower notes that western weka are recorded in the catchment. Western weka are genetically distinct from other populations of weka north of the Waitaha catchment. There is insufficient information about the impacts of the resident whio population, including the importance of the Morgan Gorge to them. There can be no confidence that Westpower is able to avoid, remedy or mitigate impacts on this iconic species, including the impacts of construction and the dewatering of the Morgan Gorge.

The long tailed bat is present within the footprint. The clearance of habitat and tree felling will result in loss of both their breeding and feeding habitat and has the potential to cause the death of bats. This is an entirely unacceptable and inappropriate risk and one that cannot be adequately mitigated for.

Furthermore, there are already other alternatives for hydro generation on the West Coast. There are already consented proposals for hydro including the schemes on the Arnold River and at Stockton. There is no case for further hydro generation that justifies the destruction of such a wild and special place.

Yours,

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10 November 2016

Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

Attention: Pauline Adams, [permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)

**Intention to grant a run of the river hydro scheme concession to Westpower Limited**

I oppose the granting of this concession. Expert kayakers consider the Morgan Gorge and the wider Waitaha River to be the crème de la crème of whitewater opportunities in New Zealand – both for the challenge it provides and the outstanding natural environment it traverses. Participants in the burgeoning sport of canyoning also consider that the gorge will provide a very high class yet accessible venue for their activities.

Section 17U of the Conservation Act requires the Minister to take into account, *inter alia*, the following:

- the effects of the activity, structure, or facility

The effects of a dam and substantial dewatering of the river will be to destroy the gorge as a kayaking resource. It will irreversibly alter the natural environment.

- any measures that can reasonably and practicably be undertaken to avoid, remedy, or mitigate any adverse effects of the activity

The only way to avoid, remedy, or mitigate any adverse effects will be to not dam the river.

Section 17U also states that “the Minister shall not grant any application for a concession to build a structure or facility ... where he or she is satisfied that the activity could reasonably be undertaken in another location that is outside the conservation area to which the application relates”. There are several other hydro-electric schemes on the West Coast that have already been consented but not built. It is therefore clear that the activity – hydro-electric generation – “could reasonably be undertaken in another location”. When the stated objective is security of electricity supply for the

Thinking, advising and writing about recreation in and management of the  
New Zealand backcountry

region, the fact that the applicant is not the proposer of the other schemes is not relevant.

Yours sincerely,



Attn. Ms Pauline Adams, DoC Hokitika.

Greetings. I am writing about the proposed hydro works on the Waitaha River in the vicinity of Morgan Gorge. I first walked through the Morgan Gorge on Labour Weekend of 1976 and I have returned many times on the southern bank track and more recently on the new northern bank track. I have also enjoyed the hot pools halfway down the Morgan Gorge and just above the thundering torrent. It is quite an amazing place and doesn't need any interference or modification by our power company.

I think it would be a disaster if there was any interference with the flow of the Waitaha River and it would destroy a natural wonder that should be left for everyone including our children, grandchildren and their children to contemplate in its unspoilt splendour.

Any attempt to build a power station on this river would destroy any idea of naturalness and would take away from our descendants the opportunity that I had to see a natural wonder at its best in a very special location.

I find it strange that Westpower have put so much effort over quite a few years into plans for destroying one of the natural wonders of the world. After their wonderful efforts at the Amethyst Creek Power Station further south it is very disappointing that they are putting so much effort into destroying one of the scenic gems of the West Coast and New Zealand. You could imagine the furore if they wished to put a scheme on the Pancake Rocks to tame the Punakaki Blowholes but this is a very similar scheme and must be stopped and not supported in any way by the Department of Conservation. Thank you



1095

**Lucy Croft**

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 10 November 2016 4:08 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Attention: Pauline Adams

I am opposed to the application by Westpower Limited for a Lease, Easement and License for a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River.

I request that the Minister of Conservation decline the Application.

I oppose the application because: The proposal does not meet the purpose of the Conservation Act.

As a past visitor to the western coast of the south island of New Zealand, I was dismayed to hear of the intention of the Minister of Conservation to grant this lease, licence and easement concession to Westpower Limited.

The appeal of New Zealand to tourists from around the world is both its natural beauty AND the culture of preservation and protection of its wilderness areas. The US is in the process of removing dams throughout the country realizing their interruption of natural systems causing unforeseen problems that outweigh benefits. The Waitaha River Valley is one of the world's most gorgeous and pristine areas of wilderness. Its ecologic, biologic and geothermal assets are memorable and valuable to future generations. Please keep it that way!

Respectfully,

Yours,



10 November 2016

Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

Attention: Pauline Adams

Dear Director-General

I wish to register my opposition to the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Limited to construct and operate a run of the river hydro scheme on the Waitaha River on the West Coast of te Waipounamu / South Island.

I think this intention to grant a concession is wrong, for many reasons. Firstly, the area is in the conservation estate and though not part of a national park, is an area of significant natural beauty and high conservation values. This area is home to many species which need to be protected, such as bats and whio. The gorge of the Waitaha River is spectacular and would be ruined if a power scheme was allowed to divert water from the river. I do not want any part of our nation's conservation estate being leased to any kind of damaging, extractive industry.

Secondly, this is a largely pointless scheme. There are many other options for generating electricity which would allow the West Coast to be self-sufficient in electricity. In terms of creating a business case which for a hydro scheme which would destroy or severely damage a unique conservation area, Westpower's reasons for choosing a hydro scheme are extremely shortsighted. If Westpower truly wants to make the West Coast self-sufficient in electricity generation, then they should not consider hydro schemes, which are an outdated twentieth century option; they should consider solar power. Westpower could, for a fraction of the cost of building, maintaining and removing a hydro scheme (once the concession period ends), install solar panels and storage batteries on all of its customers' buildings. If Westpower reinvented their business model to have partnership agreements with its customers, it could still make profits while ensuring that the West Coast would have sufficient electricity.

This is easily achievable, is a win-win for conservation of resources, does not brutally damage an exquisite landscape and would show innovative leadership as well as meeting the goal of renewable electricity generation. This option would allow Westpower to be a national leader in renewable power generation.

I am concerned about the destruction of the habitat of threatened species such as who and bats. It is inexcusable to destroy or damage their habitat. Who are torrent ducks so require a river habitat which is untouched by power generation. Bats require a habitat of forest, not only the trees in which they roost. The idea proposed of felling trees except the trees in which bats are seen roosting is pathetic and shows a lack of understanding of the ecosystem required for bats to survive.

In addition, building of an access road would provide a pathway for pest species and predators that would damage both flora and fauna in this area.

I strongly urge you to recommend to the Minister that Westpower's request for a concession should be firmly turned down.

Yours sincerely

**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, 14 November 2016 4:03 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** Waitaha submissions

I would like to be heard on my submission I am against the proposed hydro scheme on the Waitaha river. The Morgan gorge area is a pristine unspoilt area home to blue duck ( who) kaka and native flora and fauna, it has natural hot springs that are unique and used by the public, which would be unusable if the project went ahead. The department of conservation would be in breach of their statutory obligations to protect the river and its environment.

The department is setting dangerous precedents by letting corporate interests in for monetary gain.

Yours sincerely

Sent from my R83.





1127

**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 November 2016 1:23 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** Waitaha Hydro Scheme Submission

I support the proposed conditions under 17.2 in the Concession officers report.

As mentioned elsewhere, access up the True Left of the Waitaha has not been possible for many years; hence support the condition requirement to construct a tramping grade track from Macgregor Creek to Kiwi Flat to ensure continued and practical access for all recreational users.



1728

**Lucy Croft**

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**From:** .....  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 November 2016 1:24 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika; Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz  
**Subject:** Attention: Pauline Adams

I am opposed to the application by Westpower Limited for a Lease, Easement and License for a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River.

I place enormous value on free-flowing wilderness rivers. I paddled the Waitaha and similar rivers over 40 years ago, and still draw much of my spirit and identity from these wilderness experiences. I am convinced that many New Zealanders, whether they physically access our wilderness or not, also have a large part of their sense of Kiwi identity supported by our country's natural beauty. It is essential that the preeminent examples of this should be protected and sustained.

By chance I shared a river experience with you jet boating and viewing the Dart River earlier this year. Yes this demonstrated the potential commercial and economic tourist value of these areas. We are proud to share this with visitors. But much more than this, as New Zealanders, we feel for our country and are nourished by it, as you and I were when visiting the Dart.

Some may argue that there are many rivers in New Zealand, but you'll know that not all the parts of our Conservation Estate are equal. There are some real jewels, whether commonly known or less so. The Waitaha is one such gem.

Of wilderness rivers it is among the very best.

It would be a travesty to take such a treasure, such a gift to our country and to the spirit of our people, and to subsume this precious value for some dubious marginal benefit. Electricity is a ubiquitous commodity, each unit of relatively little value and indistinguishable from the next. For some minor addition to this gargantuan pool of sameness, a contribution that could be generated from almost anywhere using increasingly cheaper wind or solar, we should not sacrifice something so precious and irreplaceable as the Waitaha.

I request that you, as the Minister of Conservation, decline the Application.

I oppose the application because: The proposal does not meet the purpose of the Conservation Act.

The proposal will have an irrevocable impact on the high natural values of this wild river. The mitigation proposed by Westpower will not mitigate the impacts of the intrusion of manmade structures and altered river flows on this landscape.

This is a truly wild river and its intrinsic character that includes the native flora and fauna would be permanently destroyed by imposing a hydro scheme on public conservation land.

The impacts on these values include:

The intrinsic nature of the magnificent undisturbed river in South Westland.

The Waitaha is an unobstructed wild river.

There is wide agreement that it is an outstanding natural landscape.

The Morgan Gorge is an outstanding natural feature and one of the most spectacular gorges in the country.

The construction of a weir and associated infrastructure close to where the Waitaha enters the gorge will have an entirely unacceptable and inappropriate impact on the overwhelming naturalness of this special place.

The upper catchment of the Waitaha It is highly valued for its sense of remoteness by trampers and hunters alike and is considered to be of international significance for kayakers.

There is no mitigation measures that can compensate for the change from an outstanding wild and remote experience in the upper Waitaha to what will become a significantly modified and 'industrialised' environment as a result of the reduced river flow, weir and associated infrastructure.

The values of the Waitaha are important in and of itself.

Effects on significant flora and fauna habitat:

The permanent loss of 3.5 ha of native forest with a reduction in the intactness of the vegetation.

The removal of vegetation as a result of the proposal will cause the permanent loss of habitat for of lizard species at risk of extinction, including the green and forest gecko.

Westpower has not adequately assessed the presence of these highly threatened species and have not given any assurance that the impacts on them can be properly avoided or mitigated.

The proposal will result in the destruction of these nationally important species, any loss therefore is significant. Westpower has identified 27 native bird species with the hydro footprint, including a number of threatened native bird species. These include kaka, falcon and whio.

Westpower notes that western weka are recorded in the catchment. Western weka are genetically distinct from other populations of weka north of the Waitaha catchment. There is insufficient information about the impacts of the resident whio population, including the importance of the Morgan Gorge to them. There can be no confidence that Westpower is able to avoid, remedy or mitigate impacts on this iconic species, including the impacts of construction and the dewatering of the Morgan Gorge.

The long tailed bat is present within the footprint. The clearance of habitat and tree felling will result in loss of both their breeding and feeding habitat and has the potential to cause the death of bats. This is an entirely unacceptable and inappropriate risk and one that cannot be adequately mitigated for.

Furthermore, there are already other alternatives for hydro generation on the West Coast. There are already consented proposals for hydro including the schemes on the Arnold River and at Stockton. There is no case for further hydro generation that justifies the destruction of such a wild and special place.

Yours,

11<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Attn: Director General of Conservation

C/- Pauline Adams, DOC Hokitika

**Submission: Waitaha Hydro Proposal**

I am shocked, saddened and disillusioned by the Department of Conservation's decision to approve in principle Westpower's run-of-river hydro scheme proposal for the Waitaha River. This decision is completely contrary to the Department's role of guardianship over the conservation lands of New Zealand. It is not in keeping with protecting our natural heritage. And it risks destroying a national treasure, one of our most rugged and scenic wild rivers. I call on the Director General to re-think this decision, preventing the destruction of this special place. Please decline Westpower's application in full.

Below are just a few of the reasons why the Waitaha is worth protecting in perpetuity:

1. **International significance:** Rivers like the Waitaha are increasingly scarce on an international scale. Most have already been developed. The idea of pristine wilderness is what brings people from all over the world to visit our country – the wild rivers, rugged gorges, mountain lands and undeveloped wilderness. This is what the West Coast is capitalising on into the future, not supplying cheap power to Auckland.
2. **Recreational value:** the Waitaha River is a classic wild tramping and hunting valley. It contains four huts in the main valley, ranging from the easily accessible and scenic Kiwi Flat, to the remote Ivory Lake. Neighbouring catchments such as Scamper Torrent and County supplement this selection. It is appealing to both beginners and hard-core mountaineers. Kayakers can get their fix of whitewater rapids by running the gorge (have a look at their footage on Youtube).
3. **Flora and fauna:** the lower valley is cloaked in lush podocarp forest. It is home to the full range of native species, from tiny mosses and liverworts to blue ducks, weka and wood pigeons. The construction and operation of a power scheme would impact upon these species in many subtle and not so subtle ways.

4. **Economics:** The scheme is economically flawed. Local demand for electricity is falling, and can be met by smaller schemes in more appropriate places. Supplying the national grid is not a sufficient excuse for destroying a pristine wilderness location.
5. **Sustainability:** while Westpower's choice of hydro-power over other sources is commendable, it can only be deemed sustainable if it is appropriately sited. The choice of the Waitaha as the location for this scheme cannot be deemed appropriate in any way.
6. **Landscape spectacularity:** Anyone who has ever walked up the Morgan Gorge to Kiwi Flat knows it is the most spectacular sculpted canyon you will find anywhere on the coast, and most likely in the world. From the swing bridge you can see the rock walls curving and arching; great pinnacles rising above the glacial blue waters of the gorge.
7. **Wilderness:** Even the relatively accessible Kiwi Flat provides a backcountry experience which is unique to New Zealand, and epitomises the joys of West Coast travel. It is rugged and not without hardships. There is a need to use skill and good judgement in negotiating the terrain. The rewards are solitude, adventure, self-reliance and independence.

Westpower's proposal cannot co-exist with the values identified above. The construction of the scheme will inevitably destroy the very reasons for which the Waitaha is cherished by so many of us. It is modelled on an out-dated concept of what constitutes sustainable development and must be stopped. Declining this proposal is the only way forward if the Department of Conservation wishes to retain its integrity.

Yours Sincerely,

permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz, [Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Maggie.Barry@parliament.govt.nz)

Attention: Pauline Adams

I am opposed to a hydro scheme in the Waitaha River and request that the Minister of Conservation decline the current Westpower Application. I am very disappointed that this has been approved in principle by the Department of Conservation.

The Waitaha River is one of our remaining untamed wild rivers and the Morgan Gorge in particular is an outstanding natural feature.

The gorge is world-renowned in extreme kayaking circles and this alone should surely grant it reprieve from such major interference in its water flow and present unmodified surroundings.

However it is not only kayakers who can appreciate this amazing gorge. It is also a most memorable experience for anyone observing the water rushing through between the deep sculpted rock walls from the swingbridge at the top or from near the exit downriver. This can be either those simply making a day walk for this purpose, those enjoying an easy overnight tramp to Kiwi Flat, or others venturing on to the series of DOC huts in the remote and mountainous upper valley.

A closer, more intimate and exhilarating encounter can be made by climbing into the gorge from a point on the left bank track to soak in hot pools located in clefts in the rock walls with the raging river water passing by just a few more metres below.

The proposed site will also mean intrusions into areas of native forest and loss of habitat for some threatened species such as lizards, bats and several birds. The possible effects are not understood, and mitigation procedures against the risks seem weak or non-existent.

There is no good reason to sacrifice such a special area to a hydro scheme. Just on the West Coast there are other much better alternatives should more power be needed. The considerably larger Arnold scheme is already consented, along with one at Stockton. Westpower's recent Amethyst scheme successfully uses a steepish side stream with minimal impact, and there are surely many more such sites available if really required.

It is not universally agreed by analysts that the Westpower Waitaha proposal is economically sound – I refer to work done by Tony Baldwin in this regard.

It is certainly not a good use of Conservation land. I have visited this area several times, and taken my son there. I don't know if I will visit it again, but I certainly want to know that it is still there existing in all its natural and unique glory. Please protect this river for us all and for future generations.





**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 November 2016 5:24 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** Proposed Waitaha Hydro Generation Scheme

To Whom it may concern in the Department of Conservation,

In regards to the Proposed Westpower Waitaha Hydro Generation Scheme we fully support the initiative of Westpower to add to local electricity generation capacity.

Benefits we see are:

- Increased Regional security/reliability of electricity supply
- Less Reliance on external suppliers and the associated extra costs
- Employment for locals in the construction phase
- In an area that will have minimal visual impact, river water flows will obviously be reduced during generation between intake and return but this portion of river is used by a select few and they must remember it is benefit to the majority

With our water and contour we have the opportunity to set up niche schemes and these should be encouraged. Regional electricity self sufficiency and even electricity export to other Regions



1152

**Lucy Croft**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 November 2016 7:34 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** Waitaha Concession

45 years ago I can remember listening in awe as older tramping club members talking about there trip in the Waitaha . It was like listening about the first ascent of Everest.. That is where the Waitaha has stood, the Everest of west coast rivers for trampers and now for kayakers. once one has made made your way up there one is beholden to the elements. A hydro electric scene would destroy this and there would be no going back. It is not worth it.  
"don't know what you have got until its gone" Joni Mitchell



Lucy Croft

1157

**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 November 2016 4:48 p.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Subject:** SUBMISSION ON WESTPOWER REQUEST TO BUILD AND OPERATE HYDROPOWER STATION ON WAITAHA RIVER.

**Submission: SUBMISSION ON WESTPOWER REQUEST TO BUILD AND OPERATE HYDROPOWER STATION ON WAITAHA RIVER.**

**FROM:** Frances M C Lee, 24 Orari Street, Wellington 6035. Tel. (04)4792 600. email [flee24@clear.net.nz](mailto:flee24@clear.net.nz)

I wish to register that I am totally opposed to (and greatly disturbed by) the Conservation Minister's stated intention to grant a lease, licence and easement concession for 49 years to Westpower to develop a scheme to generate hydroelectricity on the West Coast Waitaha River. This is an extremely special pristine 'wild place' in New Zealand and should have the greatest level of protection under the Conservation Act.

Although the area is in the conservation estate, I understand it is in a statutory holding pen of stewardship land with guaranteed protection until its conservation values are finally assessed. It is appalling that DOC has neglected to take full action on such an assessment - when it could not fail to give it this fuller protection - for a period of almost three decades. As a result the area currently has the weakest level of legal protection of all conservation land. BUT this is no excuse to grant permission to develop the scheme.

The reasons given by Westpower for the need to build and operate a power station on this site - which would divert most of the river's flow from the Morgan Gorge (an absolutely amazing sight) - are pathetic and economically unrealistic. Under s17(u)4 of the Conservation Act, a concession cannot be granted if the activity is not needed. In this case, the need for this extra power cannot be justified either locally or nationally. Nor can New Zealand afford to 'give away' this amazing place.

I cannot see how the Minister of Conservation (and the Department of Conservation) could agree to this proposal, taking into consideration the full and varied effects on the environment, including the wildlife and the exceptional scenery. The preservation of such 'wild sites' is of paramount importance to New Zealand. The possibility of the Minister agreeing to Westpower's proposal brings into question the whole purpose of this Government's Conservation Policy.

want this application to be rejected.

cc. Minister of Conservation, Minister of Tourism, the Hon P Dunne, MP.



**CONSERVATION ACT 1987 SECTION 170****SUBMISSION/OBJECTION ON/TO AN INTENTION TO GRANT CONCESSIONS**

**TO:** Director-General  
Department of Conservation  
Private Bag 701  
Hokitika 7842

**Attention:** Pauline Adams, [permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz](mailto:permissionshokitika@doc.govt.nz)

**SUBMITTER:****ADDRESS FOR SERVICE:****CONCESSION APPLICANT DETAILS:**

**Applicant's name:** Westpower Limited

**Proposal:** Waitaha Hydro Scheme

**Details of application:**

The applicant wishes to obtain a concession to construct, maintain and operate a run-of-the-river hydro scheme at the Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River on Department of Conservation (DOC) stewardship land. Westpower propose to take water off through a highly visible weir across the river and tunnel entrance located in the rock face on the true right bank at the start of the Morgan Gorge. This structure and an adjacent access tunnel portal will be significant industrial intrusions into an otherwise pristine landscape and environment. The scheme proposes to take much of the flow of the river (up to 23 cumecs, river median flow (50% of the time) is 19 cumecs) and leave a residual flow of 3.5 cumecs in the Morgan Gorge at all times – higher and flood flows will still travel down the Morgan Gorge when the proposed Westpower take is exceeded. The water is returned to the river about 2.5 km downstream of the intake via a powerhouse on the north bank of the river.

The reach of the Waitaha River that is of particular concern with respect to the current requested concession is from the powerhouse site upstream to the headwaters of the Waitaha River, and including the Morgan Gorge.

**SUBMISSION/OBJECTION:**

I oppose and object to the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to

**Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River.**

**I wish to be heard in support of this submission.**

### **Introduction**

The Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River, and the Upper Waitaha River including the Waitaha and Windhover Gorges and catchment to the main divide constitute an outstanding wild and scenic river, with outstanding natural beauty, scenery and wilderness values, and outstanding kayaking values for expert and developing kayakers. The Morgan Gorge and the upper Waitaha River runs represent the pinnacle of white water runs for the most skilled of expert kayakers. Therefore, like their exemplars of other outstanding beginner, intermediate, advanced and expert white water runs water throughout the country, some of which are protected by Water Conservation Orders, this river warrants the same statutory recognition and protection.

The proposed Westpower hydro scheme will have a number of significant impacts on the values of the Morgan Gorge, the river above, and a section of the river below the Morgan Gorge, that are currently used by kayakers and other back country recreation users.

### **Request Declining the Granting of the Concession**

As I can't attend any hearing personally, I would like to express my opinion in this form:

*Dear Minister of Conservation,*

*Hereby I oppose and object to the intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River. I strongly urge you to reconsider and reverse a decision to allow a powerstation being built on one of the most pristine rivers of New Zealand. From experience with European hydroelectric utilities, I can state that it is a drastic measure with severe impact on the whole ecosystem when a river is drained or dammed. New Zealand is world-wide known as a green country with strongly enforced nature preservation laws. It very rightly prides itself on unique natural sights, as well as endemic fauna and flora. Tourists and natives alike find strength in the mighty unspoiled forests and wilderness of which the rivers are indisputable part. Destroying one of its pearls would send a peculiar message to the rest of the world that lags behind and looks up to New Zealand as far as nature preservation goes. Damming a river sucks the life out of nature and changes lives of inhabitants along the river shores. Last but not least, it takes pleasure from people rejoicing in the proximity of water. I believe there are better sustainable sources of energy that do not ultimately and irreversibly alter the natural heritage of our planet. I suggest to invest the time and energy into researching other options than hydro-energy.*

*Yours sincerely*



I request that the Minister of Conservation's intention to grant a concession to Westpower Ltd to construct and operate a hydro scheme on the Waitaha River be reversed and that the concession not be granted as the proposed development:

- will impact severely on the natural feature and wilderness and scenic values of the spectacular, powerful, majestic, water carved, fluted, schist rock Morgan Gorge, which separates the upper wild and scenic Waitaha back country catchment from the front country, as well as the whole catchment
- is incompatible with the outstanding natural feature (ONF) status of the Morgan Gorge and outstanding natural landscape (ONL) status of the Waitaha River from the bottom of the Morgan Gorge to the headwaters and values of the stewardship land involved
- is incompatible with the purpose of the Conservation Act, and especially with respect to the purpose of DOC stewardship land
- is not needed for the power it will generate, nor would it provide for greater reliability of power distribution for the West Coast
- is contrary to various Objectives and Policies in Regional and District Plans and the West Coast Conservation Management Strategy
- will prevent current recreational users and particularly kayakers from accessing the Morgan Gorge and a river reach below
- will severely impinge and intrude on the outstanding kayaking, white water, wilderness and landscape values of a wild and scenic West Coast river. The proposed scheme will have a significant adverse effect on the outstanding kayaking values in the river. Such issues are not properly addressed in the application
- the mitigation offered if the scheme goes ahead is not sufficient, workable, or appropriate. This concession without appropriate consent conditions will effectively stop kayakers using the resource, not just in the Morgan Gorge but elsewhere in the catchment, where no mitigation is provided
- New Zealand is swamped with power generation, there are plenty of other less damaging consented power schemes and infrastructure on the West Coast available to provide power, MBIE say we don't need the power, so if this extra generation is not needed why ruin the beautiful wild Waitaha River?
- does not make sense, there is no need to destroy this pristine wilderness river for the sake of power generation that is not needed. don't do it!

For these reasons I ask that the decision on the concession application be reversed and that the Minister decline granting the concession to Westpower.



Lucy Croft

1174

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Sent:** Saturday, 12 November 2016 10:45 a.m.  
**To:** Permissions Hokitika  
**Cc:** Tony Ward-Holmes (Whitewater NZ)  
**Subject:** Submission: Waitaha River

Dear Pauline Adams

I am totally opposed to the proposed use of the Waitaha River for power generation.

The river has outstanding natural, scenic and recreational values and these would be severely impacted if this proposal went ahead.

It is on the Crown Conservation Estate and, in my view, it would border on illegality and certainly be contrary to policy to allow the proposed use when there are other suitable rivers in the vicinity that are not on Crown conservation land.

The economic reasons for building a power scheme here do not stack up, nor is there good evidence that there is a sufficient power demand, both now and in the future.

The inter-generational costs of this proposal would be huge and the damage to New Zealand's environmental reputation would be considerable if it went ahead.

The lessons of the failed Mokihinau River power proposal suggest that little good will come of West Power's proposal and it would be both misguided and wasteful of resources for them to pursue it. It is surprising that the proposal has gained approval in principle. The reputation of the Minister and the Government would be severely dented if this proposal were to proceed.

Yours sincerely

