

**Interviewee:** Linton Adams and Andy Soper

**Title:** Former Chair of Rotary and President of Rotary

**Interview Date:** 01/31/24.

**Interview Time:** 10:30-11:30 AM

Linton (L)

Andy (A)

- Can you please tell us what both your roles have been with Rotary?

L: has been working at the Rotary since 1991. His first project was in 1992, so he has also been involved with the Hutt River Trail since day 1. He was president in 2009.

A: since 5 years ago, he is the current president.

The Rotary Club is 80 years old (1943). This was funded during WWII; L thinks maybe a US army man have the idea of starting it.

‘Lifechanging for the valley.’

- Can you provide a brief history of Rotary’s involvement in the River Corridor?

Follow up: how much is Rotary currently involved in the corridor?

In 1992 Rob Wilson was president and he was the “ideas man” and he wanted a big project because in 1993 was going to be the 50<sup>th</sup> for the club. He wanted an iconic project, and he knew Ross (parks manager at the time). This became a project that was never finished because it was going on for 30-32 years until the Wakatiki bridge was finished. The River was used as a sort of dumping ground before.

The Rotary noticed it was too big of a project for the club so they collaborated with 8 clubs from Petone all the way till Upper Hutt. GWRC provided materials and they were based at Mabey Rd. There were some tensions with the rangers because they had a bit of resistance due to worries regarding flood management. However, once the trail was formed and people started to use it, people started to thank flood protection (GWRC) so attitudes changed. More people became involved in it. Hutt City and Upper Hutt came and started working together, which didn’t happen often before.

L: "Rotary is good at talking to people to bring them together."

- From your perspective, what is the main purpose of the River Corridor?

Flood protection and control is the main purpose. We fit the trail over that. The corridor is a roadway for birds. They can get water and food there on their way to Zealandia. Native plantings are seen more now, before it used to only be willows for flood control.

- Do you believe recreational use of the River Corridor is important, why or why not?

"Yes! It used to always be an area for vandalism. Now, because more people use it, that sort of antisocial behavior is deterred. This is the most used regional asset."

Central government gave the councils money to seal some parts. This goes against the Rotary's original idea, but that is evolution so the Rotary has adapted to the multiuse. At least 1 million users per year.

New Zealand is not a bike culture and so people had to start learning. People are slowly learning bike etiquette.

The Rotary wanted the trail to undulate (braid) not be straight. But because of the stopbanks it has been narrowed too much. This is against the original aim. Parts commuting and parts nature. There is an "evolutionary compromise".

- How does Rotary balance flood protection and increased desire for recreational use?

Flood takes priority.

- Do you believe all the trails along the corridor could be expanded? If so, how much

Follow up: What would be a realistic timeline for completing it? Who do you think would be responsible for funding this project?

Otago Rail Trail is the most popular recreational trail in New Zealand. The idea of the trail was that you could come to Wellington, get a bike, and ride the trail.

L: I think it'll become their Otago Rail Trail. Start at the harbor, go to the river, up the mountain, and come back on the south coast.

On the 2009 survey it showed that 400 people bike the motorway every day.

The new cycle way that they are building next to the train will have charging points and lights.

- Are you a user of the Hutt River Corridor?

Follow up if yes: What activities do you use the corridor for?

If no: Is there a reason you do not use the corridor?

A: I used it more in the past as a cyclist.

- Do you believe there is conflict between the users of the Hutt River Corridor?

“Yes, but it is less now because people are realizing they must cooperate.”

Follow up if yes: What do you believe could be a solution for the conflicts between users without excluding any user?

Partly addressed when signs are painted in the tar seal. Indicators that it is a shared pathway.

Good signage could improve, the poles currently there have lasted 25 years.

- What are your thoughts on adapting the corridor for increased commuter cyclists use?

We never intended it to be that way, but we understand it is happening. They would like to have alternatives, for example having commuters at the top of stop banks and others on the part below.

“Separation, when possible, is key.”

Follow up: Do you believe commuters should be using the shared space that currently exists or a new path should be created? Why?

“No, this would be the perfect solution.”

- Does the addition of a commuter route in the Hutt River Corridor affect your work with Rotary? If so, how?

No it wouldn't. The commuter part came from central government.

- What is your ideal situation for users within the River Corridor?

Follow up: what would it take to accomplish this?

Ideas for Rotary to keep being involved would be events to raise money for the community.

They have done a lot of planting.

L: commuter cyclists are there at different times of the day.

“It will be the biggest tourist attraction in Wellington.”