

Interviewee: Bryce Johnson

Title: Fishing Advocate

Interview Date: 02/08/24.

Interview Time: 12:15-1:00 PM

Can you please tell us what your role is within the fishing community? What is your role within Fish and Game NZ? What is Fish and Game NZ?

“They get involved in a lot of Environmental Protection and advocacy and obviously promoting the pastimes of hunting and fishing.”

“New Zealand is divided up into 12 Fish and Game regions, and the regions are responsible for maintaining, managing, and enhancing sports fish and game and the recreational interests of anglers and hunters. That's what the act of Parliament sees, and my role as chief executive of the national body, was to coordinate that and be very involved in advocacy and litigation. Fish and Game NZ does quite a lot of environmental litigation, but also promoting the pastimes of hunting and fishing.”

Worked on the national board

“I spent a lot of time lobbying politicians and giving talks and doing the media nationally.”

Are you a user of the Hutt River Corridor?

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

“I do a little bit, when I'm walking my dog or riding.”

“I don't do a lot of fishing there. I mean, where I was fishing yesterday when you rang me was a river over the over the Wairarapa.”

“But it's actually a very good fishery. And what's quite remarkable about it, is that it's actually very it's a very good quality trout fishery.”

“But it seems to get underrated because a lot of Wellingtonians think they need to go to another region to get good fishing. In fact, the Hutt River is very good.”

Can you explain your experience with fishing along the Hutt River Corridor?

“There aren't any problems.”

“The trail goes along the trail provides a very good access to the river all the way along and that's excellent.”

“I'm also a member of a group called **Friends of the Hutt River** and we're a small community group.”

“So well, no, it's good, the trail's very good and Wellington Regional Council, to their credit, have really stepped up on that in the last decade or so and the improving their signage. And I see you were referred to me by Joby Mills. Yeah, he's an arranger. He does an excellent job.”

“I've been lobbying the local City Council in Upper Hutt to actually put up a little bit more signage promoting the aspects of the river. And I think they should make it apart of their branding for the Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt City.”

Follow up: In your role do you ever work with the GWRC?

Not directly with the council

“my focus has been on the public signage through the little group called Friends of the River and we're trying to get good interpretive signage.”

What is your ideal situation for fishers within the River Corridor and what would it take to accomplish this?

“Pretty much as it is now.”

“A huge number of people ride and walk and take their dogs for walks on the river. Well now the signage, they also tells those members of the public that this is also a good fishery.”

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

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

“Not to my knowledge, not to my knowledge, I think it's quite unique and that there aren't any.”

“Nothing's come to my attention or the attention of the small group I belong to.”

What are your thoughts on adapting the River Corridor for increased commuter cyclists use?

Follow up: Would this affect you, if so, how?

“I don't see a difficulty with it. I mean, you don't want to think getting overloaded. I mean, part of the experience is that you're enjoying the place and it's moderately natural state.”

“I think people find their own comfort zone really”

Do you have any suggestions for addressing concerns with increased commuter usage?

Are there any suggestions you have that would improve your experience and Fish and Game NZ's experience within the Hutt River Corridor?

“I just think the signage would be good, not overloaded with signs, but some good interpretive signs and actually told the story at a certain location as there was.”

“The sight of a of a local village but tribal village or something and just the information that told people the story so they could feel as though they really knew the place rather than just, you know, a corridor with a river going down it.”