



Over 100 kayak and raft the the Mokihinui River on Labour Weekend

Over Labour Weekend over a hundred people will fly into the Mokihinui River on the West Coast, a wilderness river under threat of being dammed. The trip, organised by Whitewater NZ and Forest & Bird, is the largest of its kind to be held in New Zealand and will involve kayakers, rafters, VIPs, conservationists and media people from all over New Zealand. The trip is an opportunity to highlight the importance of the river, give this diverse group an opportunity to be part of a journey down the river, and let the river speak to them.

"The Mokihinui River is not only an outstanding river for whitewater kayaking, it is an outstanding river for all recreationalists in New Zealand," said Hugh Canard, Patron for Whitewater NZ and trip organiser. "The Mokihinui is a truly wilderness river and the West Coast Regional Council's decision to allow it to be dammed marks a watershed moment for New Zealand's environment."

Meridian Energy have been given consent to build an 85 metre high dam on the river, which will destroy more than 330 hectares of river gorge and virgin native forest under a 14 kilometre long artificial lake. One of the most sobering statements at the Resource Consent Hearing was the opening paragraph by legal counsel for the Department of Conservation who stated: "The Mokihinui hydro scheme is the largest scale proposed flooding of public conservation land in New Zealand since the Manapouri scheme of the late 1960s and early 1970s. If approved, and constructed, it will be the largest inundation for hydro electric generation purposes of lands and ecosystems set aside for protection and conservation ever seen in this country."

"The Mokihinui Hydro-Electric Project is also unnecessary," Polly Miller, Whitewater NZ President said. "With the granting of consents for both the Dobson scheme on the Arnold River, and the Stockton Plateau scheme at Ngakawau, the Mokihinui need not be dammed. The combined output of the Dobson and Stockton schemes will supply all of the West Coast's electricity needs, with a surplus." Submissions in opposition to Meridian Energy's proposal attracted widespread support, with many different recreation and conservation groups, and individuals, submitting against the proposal.



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Whitewater NZ works to protect and conserve rivers, improve opportunities for kayakers to enjoy our whitewater resources safely, and protect public access to rivers for recreational use. We are the primary advocate for the preservation and protection of whitewater resources throughout New Zealand.

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