

Cold Gold Hearing - Jeff Forsee's speaking notes.

Who I am:

- Local fishing guide in the region for the past ten years.
 - We operate **walk and wade** fishing trips where we fish on foot and are fairly confined to one part of the river for the day and if the dredge is nearby this will cause a significant disruption to the day and ruin the experience.
 - We also **float fish** the river from rafts and passing the dredge will not only cause a significant disruption to the amenity of the place and experience but will add an unnecessary level of risk to floating the river.
- Our guests come from all over the world to experience New Zealand's world class trout fishery (good numbers and size of fish) and pristine river environments. This is high dollar tourism at \$1200/day for guide rates plus contributions to the local economy from accommodation, food and beverage, transportation, fishing licenses, shops and other activities.
- These guests and many others do not come here to see industrial, large-scale mining operations in these pristine environments. As an existing, local operator I cannot see myself conducting operations in the same place as this operation.
 - This proposal not only threatens the health of the fishery in these places but also threatens the amenity value which are the two **equally important** reasons why visitors choose New Zealand and the upper Clutha river.
- We currently cater to a conservative 130 - 150 anglers per year and with projected growth for float fishing operations on the upper Clutha specifically we are likely to double that in coming years. I am only one of many fishing guides - NZPFGA has made a submission.

The Trout:

- Trout habitat - the nature of the dredge will turn over the bottom of the river disturbing habitat - they sit behind boulders, trees, rocks and undulations in the river bed.

- Trout food - Majority of the trout's diet comes from aquatic insects that live under the rocks on the river bottom which this operation will very clearly disturb.
 - After the introduction of didymo the river and the fishery can sustain no further impacts.

- Trout spawning - trout dig redds in the bottom of the river in which they lay their eggs; these can be anywhere and this operation will very clearly disturb this process. Robust and successful spawning each season is imperative to the health and future of the fishery.
 - I've witnessed trout spawning in the river between the months of May and November.

- Fish move between the upper Clutha, lakes Dunstan, Wanaka and Hawea and tributaries such as the Lindis river, the Cardrona river, Luggate creek etc. These are all healthy and robust fisheries in their own right and the proposal could have adverse effects to these other locations.
 - Roll on effects to spawning and population recruitment.

- I have major concerns about the effects the dredge will have on water quality from both pollutants and disruption to the river bed and sediments which could have adverse effects on the fishery and the amenity of the place.
 - The Clutha is a remarkably clean and clear river, which is unique for a river of its size. It seems irresponsible to jeopardize that.

- The river is a powerful one and I have fears about the worst case scenario of the dredge capsizing or wrecking which would result in an environmental disaster of an unprecedented scale.

- I understand the dredge has been operational on the lower Clutha for some time but it is worth noting that these two sections are not the same. The lower river is much wider and has significantly higher flows. The upper river has many braids and flows into the top of lake dunstan which is a productive trout fishery in its own right.

- **Safety** - The river is a powerful, fast flowing body of water which can be challenging to navigate in unpowered craft. The dredge will add an additional and unnecessary obstacle for river users.

Te Mana o te Wai

- **Te Mana o te Wai** - I understand that the government has made a commitment to improving the health of rivers within 10 years under Te Mana o te Wai and I ask the commissioners to uphold this and give it top priority in their decision making on this proposal.

Summary

- The Clutha is a thriving ecosystem with a lush riparian zone. It's an outdoor resource that is close to communities in the upper Clutha region like, Wanaka, Hawea, Tarras, Cromwell, Alexandra, Clyde and Queenstown. I can be on the nearest part of the river within 15min of my home in Hawea and the furthest stretches in 35min. - it's a convenient and valued local resource.
- Aside from my work I spend a lot of time on the river fishing, hunting for quail, rabbits and ducks - the presence of a dredge will hamper this experience. Myself and many other locals and internationals use the river for walking and running, rafting and kayaking, fishing, camping, picnicking, swimming and generally enjoying the peace and quiet of a highly valued, local, public resource.
- I spend a lot of time on the river with my partner and our 3 year old son Gus. I think it's our highest responsibility to look after these places so we can pass them onto future generations in good health.