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Taking the Plunge: 
Assessing and Managing Risks in Adventure Tourism 
in Lower North Island 
New Zealand

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment 
of the requirements for the degree 
of 
Master of Resource and Environmental Planning 
at 
Massey University

Cheyenne Yakima Caine 
1998
Abstract

This thesis seeks to discover the nature of risks in adventure tourism and how these risks can be managed effectively. There are three major sources of risk i.e. the natural environment, people and equipment. Risk results in consequences. These are usually undesirable events such as drownings. Several incidents have occurred in the recent past prompting negative publicity.

To keep incidents at a minimum, several regulatory measures exist for example codes of practice, insurance, risk management plans, legislation, certification and safety standards. These methods can be administered by government, the industry or by businesses themselves. Currently, a combination of the latter two modes of implementation (i.e. industry driven self-regulation) is preferred.

A Lower North Island case study using three actives (i.e. whitewater rafting, bungy jumping and jetboating) is used to examine the topic. Operator perceptions of risk are examined, management practices identified and a package for risk management developed. An estimation of the riskiness of the three case study activities is also possible. All businesses interviewed have some form of risk management in place. Operators desire a three tier division of responsibility for risk management including themselves, the government and an industry body.
There are a number of people I’d like to thank for their support and assistance during the preparation of this thesis. First of all, my supervisor, Professor Phillip McDermott, for assisting me with ideas and information, as well as providing support throughout the duration of the thesis. Then, thank you to all the persons who participated in the thesis from throughout the adventure tourism industry. I appreciate the time you took from your schedules to facilitate my visit and phone calls. Without the valuable information and insights you gave, I would not have been able to complete this work. Finally, I would like to thank my flatmates and friends (especially those outside of New Zealand) who provided support by phone, in person and especially by email. Thanks for understanding when I was swamped with work, when I was grumpy and providing words of encouragement and humour. Now I need a vacation!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introducing the Issues 1

1.1 Thesis Aim and Objectives 1
1.2 Thesis Structure 2
1.3 Adventurous New Zealand 3
1.4 Adventure Activities 4
1.5 The Adventure Tourism Image 4
  1.5.1 Place 4
  1.5.2 Experimentation 8
  1.5.3 Thrills 8
1.6 Concern Mounts 9
1.7 Setting the Stage 13

Chapter 2: The Character of Risk and Uncertainties 15

2.1 Introduction 15
2.2 The Nature of Risk 15
2.3 Physical risks in New Zealand 17
  2.3.1 The Broad Picture 17
  2.3.2 Major threats 19
  2.3.3 Other Threats 21
  2.3.4 Vulnerability 22
  2.3.5 Mitigation and Management 23
2.4 The Risk Assessment - Risk Management Paradigm 23
2.5 Risk Assessment 25
  2.5.1 An Objective Process? 25
  2.5.2 The Risk Assessment Process 25
2.6 Risk Management 27
2.7 The Nature of the Accident 28
2.8 Case Study Activities 30
  2.8.1 Whitewater Rafting 30
  2.8.2 Jetboating 33
  2.8.3 Bungy Jumping 35
6.4 Managing Risk - Preferred Approaches
   6.4.1 Synthesising the Approaches
   6.4.2 A Proposed Risk Management Package

Chapter 7: The Thesis in Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Answering the Research Questions
   7.2.1 What are the risks present in adventure activities?
   7.2.2 What attitudes to risk pervade adventure tourism?
   7.2.3 How are the risks currently managed in adventure businesses?
   7.2.4 What approach could be taken to better manage risk in adventure tourism?

7.3 The Research in Essence

7.4 The Future of Adventure Tourism in New Zealand

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 List of Survey Participants
Appendix 2 Survey Questionnaire
Appendix 3 Open Schedule for Interviews
Appendix 4 Taupo Bungy Waiver Form
Appendix 5 Contents Page for Schedule 80; Draft Marine Rules

BIBLIOGRAPHY
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Thesis Structure</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>An A-Z of Adventure Activities in New Zealand</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Locating Adventure Activities in New Zealand</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>The Dart River Jet Trademark</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Rafting Incident on the Shotover River (1994)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Mountaineering Incident on Mt. Ruapehu (1997)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Rafting Fatality on the Shotover River (1994)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Linking Risk and Adventure Tourism</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>New Zealand as a hazardous landscape</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Managing Risks in New Zealand</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Framework for Assessing and Managing Risk</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Managing Risk in Adventure Businesses</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Methodology used in Thesis Research</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Environmental Risk Impact and Occurrence in Jetboating</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Environmental Risk Impact and Occurrence in Whitewater Rafting</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Environmental Risk Impact and Occurrence in Bungy Jumping</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Client Risk Impact and Occurrence in Jetboating</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Client Risk Impact and Occurrence in Whitewater Rafting</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Client Risk Impact and Occurrence in Bungy Jumping</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Guide Risk Impact and Occurrence in Jetboating</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Guide Risk Impact and Occurrence in Whitewater Rafting</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>Guide Risk Impact and Occurrence in Bungy Jumping</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>Equipment Risk Impact and Occurrence in Jetboating</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>Equipment Risk Impact and Occurrence in Whitewater Rafting</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>Equipment Risk Impact and Occurrence in Bungy Jumping</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>Risk Profile of Jetboat Operators</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>Risk Profile of Whitewater Rafting Operators</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>Risk Profile of Bungy Jump Operators</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 1  Pyle and Gough's Risk Typology 15
Table 2  Environmental Hazards in Outdoor Recreation 17
Table 3  Major Natural Hazards in New Zealand 20
Table 4  The Seven Characteristics of an 'Accident' 29
Table 5  A Generic Risk Management Plan 55
Table 6  Structure of Case Study Operations 66
Table 7  A Proposed Risk Management Package 108
Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall
He didn't get bruised
He didn't get bumped
Humpty Dumpty bungee-jumped

Edwards, R (1997)
Challenge your spirit!