

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 157<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND  
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW  
ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 7<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2016 AT 12.00PM**

**Present**

Murray Ferris, Lindsay Lyons, Barry Roderick, Neal Hawes, Peter Storey, Laurance Tamati, David Woolner, Annaka Davis, Sandy Bull, and Alan Baird (arrived 12.07pm).

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson, Eben Herbert, Matthew McDougall, John Meikle, Lloyd Gledhill, Mark Sherburn, Anthony van Dorp, Matt Osborne, (Eastern Fish & Game); Colin Paton (Tongariro-Taupo Conservation Board); Ken Raureti and Bill Clark (Bay of Plenty Conservation Board); Jenn Sheppard, Wallace Bain, Peter Fahey, and Pat Swift.

**1.0 WELCOME**

1.1 Cr Murray Ferris opened the meeting at 12.00pm and welcomed members of the Conservation Boards Ken Raureti, Bill Clark, and Colin Paton; Tarawera Trout Fishers Club members Wallace Bain and Peter Fahey; and Jenn Sheppard and Pat Swift.

**2.0 APOLOGIES**

2.1 Apologies were received from Crs Ken Coombes and Steve Scragg, Ray Bushell, and Cr Alan Baird advised that he would be running a little late.

2.2 *Agreed (Laurance Tamati/Neal Hawes) that the apologies for the 157th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [16/04/2.2]*

**3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (18 FEBRUARY 2016)**

3.1 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Neal Hawes) that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2016 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [16/04/3.1]*

3.2 Identification of resolutions for inclusion in Council Policy.

3.3 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Neal Hawes) that Item 12.2 relating to the term of elected officers be included as Council Policy. [16/04/3.3]*

**4.0 MATTERS ARISING**

4.1 Cr Laurance Tamati requested an update on Item 11.5 relating to access to Rotomahana. Andy Garrick advised that he and Anthony van Dorp had met with Timberlands to discuss issues and options and potential solutions, and spoke briefly about these. He said that Fish & Game was now awaiting the outcome of a meeting Timberlands would be having with the CNI access committee (which represents the interests of the Kaingaroa landowners through whose land the access passes) to discuss the proposed arrangement.

**5.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS**

- Murray Ferris – Change to meeting length/agenda content

## **6.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER**

- 6.1 An updated conflict of interest register was circulated which in accordance with suggestions made at February's Council meeting, now required all Councillors present to indicate whether they have a conflict or potential conflict of interest with an item on the agenda, i.e. YES/NO, and to sign the register whether or not they do. Andy also circulated a "Declaration of Interest" form which had been adopted by the New Zealand Council with the intention that all Councillors complete this declaration once a year in accordance with accepted governance practice.

## **7.0 CHANGES TO AGENDA ORDER**

- 7.1 Cr Barry Roderick requested that Item 10 "Issues and Options for Producing Trophy Trout" which had been scheduled for later in the meeting be advanced for the benefit of several members of the public who were attending today's meeting for the specific purpose of this discussion.
- 7.2 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Lindsay Lyons) that Item 10 "Issues and Options for Producing Trophy Trout" be considered prior to Item 7 "Anglers Notice Review". [16/04/7.2]*

## **8.0 ISSUES AND OPTIONS FOR PRODUCING TROPHY TROUT**

- 8.1 Andy Garrick noted that in addition to information relating to this item provided in the agenda a submission had been received from the Tarawera Trout Fishers Club (TTFC) and this had been circulated to all members just prior to the meeting. Andy commented that while we are totally committed to improving the situation at Tarawera, Council needed to be aware that whatever course of action might ultimately be taken with the aim of doing so may not provide the desired outcome as there are many environmental factors in play.
- 8.2 Cr Barry Roderick congratulated and thanked Matt Osborne for the detailed analysis which had been provided with the agenda paper.
- 8.3 Andy Garrick introduced Wallace Bain who would be speaking to the submission from the Tarawera Trout Fishers Club.
- 8.4 Wallace Bain appreciated the opportunity to speak confirming that he and the TTFC share the Council's views and objectives on this matter. Wallace also thanked Matt Osborne for his outstanding paper adding that it was heartening to see advice of this quality. As described within the submission Wallace requested that Council consider the appointment of a sub-committee to specifically address this priority and provided details of those keen to spend the time required. Wallace also spoke about iwi concerns, opportunities for employment and tourism in the long term, recent good catches through jigging, Terry Beckett's detailed data going back 40 plus years, grounds for Government funding, reducing the size of liberations and the unknown effect that this would have, and the abundance and size of smelt in Rotoiti compared with Tarawera.
- 8.5 Council and public discussion covered the following;
- care needed in making decisions with no scientific backing;
  - past attempts to manipulate the Okataina fishery using size limits;
  - whether or not attempts to create a regional trophy fishery would be better focussed on Okataina once more due to the reduced pressure it receives, and the likelihood that any negative consequences that might arise from management actions would impact on a smaller number of anglers;

- possible outcomes of reducing the number of large fish taken at Tarawera and the possibility that while this may result in greater numbers of older fish being available, they may not necessarily grow to a larger size due to environmental conditions now prevailing within the lake;
  - recent good sized fish being taken at Tarawera;
  - shags chasing hooked trout at Tarawera suggesting a possible issue with smelt/prey populations;
  - improvements to the environment and water quality likely to have a flow on effect to fisheries;
  - some very good fish being caught at the eastern end of Lake Rotoiti where water quality in that lake is at its poorest;
  - insufficient knowledge of smelt population dynamics, and lack of technologies until now perhaps (c.f. Taupo work) and cost effective means for monitoring smelt.
- 8.6 Cr Peter Storey queried how it was known whether the proposed reduction to the annual liberation to 12,500 was enough to have an impact. Andy Garrick responded that we can't be entirely sure of the outcomes of doing so as there are too many unknown and unquantifiable factors involved. We don't even know if there needs to be a reduction in the numbers of fish liberated. Andy noted that any changes that might be made need to be based on the best science we have, we need to be able to measure the outcomes, and we need to allow sufficient time to see the results.
- 8.7 Cr Laurance Tamati queried the use of the technology currently being used on Lake Taupo? Andy provided an overview of what was being done there and advised that staff will be looking into this further with a view to determining whether this is something we could usefully and practically employ here, and whether the technology is capable of providing the size and abundance data we're looking for.
- 8.8 Some Councillors voiced their support for the establishment of a sub-committee as proposed by the TTFC to tackle this priority, commenting that it presented a good opportunity but noting also, that any sub-committee would need to have a very clear brief and terms of reference. Cr David Woolner indicated he supported the idea to some degree but felt that with the lack of scientific data available he was unsure whether such a committee would be able to help from a scientific point of view. He suggested if numbers of trout liberated at Tarawera were to be reduced don't mess with reducing it to 12,500, reduce it to 10,000 so that effects could be more readily determined.
- 8.9 Matt McDougall spoke of the distinction between Council's role and staff's role, and noted that while Council wishes to see an improvement in fish size on Tarawera, it was the role of staff to enable that. He added that putting less fish in the lake would not help if the numbers coming out were unknown, and suggested that solutions such as this might actually exacerbate the problem.
- 8.10 Cr Murray Ferris felt that the formation of a sub-committee was premature and that Council needed to ensure that it did not crossover into operational matters. He confirmed Council's concern and that they wished to see an improvement in fish size on Tarawera, suggesting that the desired outcomes may take some time as the decline in the fishery had occurred over a number of years.
- 8.11 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Lindsay Lyons) that Council wishes to see an improvement in the size of trout in Lake Tarawera. [16/04/8.11]*

- 8.12 Cr Murray Ferris thanked the members of public present for their input and agreed that the appropriate course of action would be to leave this in staff's hands.
- 8.13 Ken Raureti advised that he was happy with that, and Wallace Bain added that he supported an extended "closed" period but acknowledged not everyone else shared this view.
- 8.14 Andy Garrick acknowledged the Council's wishes and advised that staff would develop an operational plan taking into account all of the ideas and views that had been put on the table. He confirmed too, that staff would continue to communicate with the TTFC and associates, and was happy to receive further ideas and input from all interested parties.

#### **9.0 2016-2017 ANGLERS NOTICE**

- 9.1 Cr Neal Hawes asked to withdraw his submission 5.8 relating to closure of the Te Wairoa Stream mouth from 1 April and 30 September due to the other work being proposed for Lake Tarawera.
- 9.2 Cr Peter Storey requested the addition of a restriction on glo bugging at the Te Wairoa mouth. Mark Sherburn advised that a sign had previously been erected appealing to anglers not to glo bug there, but beyond this it was extremely difficult to regulate against as it was almost impossible to define as a method.
- 9.3 Cr Sandy Bull advised the Waikaremoana Boating & Fishing Association supported the status quo continuing to apply. Matt Osborne advised he had received a submission from Sandy and other clubs and anglers to date but not one from this club.
- 9.4 Council discussed the submission to move opening day to the first weekend of October in order to enable more anglers to participate. Discussion covered the following:
- increased participation leading to increased licence sales;
  - mid week opening spreads the load on the already very busy lakes at this time;
  - many anglers stay on for the following weekend;
  - need to advocate for better infrastructure as many going out the day prior to avoid congestion;
  - we have a goal to simplify regulations;
  - timing of school holidays has an effect.

Council concluded the discussion noting that the 2016 opening will fall on a Saturday and that this would provide a great opportunity to review and assess concerns relating to the commencement of opening day.

- 9.5 Cr Laurance Tamati queried whether staff could indicate their preferred "option" when listing these for each Anglers Notice proposal. Cr Barry Roderick agreed that this would be helpful as Council is comfortable with staff's judgement. Matt Osborne suggested that this could be construed as staff leading the Council and could open Council up for criticism. Andy Garrick commented that it was the staff's role to provide sufficient information for Councillors to be able to make a reasoned decision. He added however, that while some items submitted are of a biological nature and have biological consequences requiring scientific input from staff, others are of a more social nature and more a matter for Council to debate and determine.

#### **10.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2016-2017 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN**

- 10.1 Andy Garrick provided a brief overview of the Operational Work Planning process and the need to confirm the draft budget and proposed contestable funding

applications at this meeting. Andy advised that at the February meeting Council had decided there were no major changes in direction needed other than slight changes in emphasis. Andy provided a brief overview of projects to be incorporated into the 2016-2017 work plan for next year and provided a summary of the contestable fund applications being sought in relation to staff salaries, mallard monitoring, prosecutions, protective equipment, and reserves restoration.

**10.2** *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Sandy Bull) that Council receives the draft budget and approves the proposed contestable funding bids for the 2016-2017 Operation Work Plan. [16/4/10.2]*

**11.0 WAIKAREMOANA SPORTS FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT FUND**

**11.1** Andy Garrick provided a summary of works planned to be carried out by staff within the Wairoa catchment during the 2015-16 operational year with funding from the WSFHEF of \$19,000. Andy advised that final planning and budgeting of work programmes within the catchment for the 2016-17 year had yet to be completed, but proposed that a similar amount be allocated from the Fund as there was a need to continue the Waikaremoana fishery monitoring programme that was now into its second year in addition to covering the yet to be quantified costs associated with the recovery and likely repair of the Water Quality Monitoring Buoy. Andy advised that he hoped he would have further information available in relation to the resurrection of the buoy for presentation to the June meeting of Council.

**11.2** *Agreed (Peter Storey/Lindsay Lyons) that Council approves in principle a sum of \$19,000 to be allocated from the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund for the 2016-17 operational year, in order to fund the continuation of work within the Wairoa catchment, and costs associated with the extraction of the water quality monitoring buoy, subject to additional information being supplied at the June meeting of Council. [16/4/11.2]*

**11.3** Council discussed the application for financial assistance put forward by the Waikaremoana Boating & Fishing Association to replace four navigation markers on Lake Waikaremoana. Initial comments were in relation to maintenance and legalities of these structures. Cr Murray Ferris advised that the Waikaremoana Boating & Fishing Association had completed the necessary applications/approvals and had made arrangements to do the work in conjunction with the Department of Conservation and iwi. Andy Garrick suggested that it would be appropriate to obtain copies of the required approvals.

**11.4** *Agreed (Annaka Davis/Sandy Bull) that Council approves funding of \$12,000 from the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund to assist the Waikaremoana Boating & Fishing Association with the replacement of four navigation markers as specified within their application, subject to Council receiving copies of the necessary approvals for these structures. [16/04/11.4]*

**12.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS**

**12.1 Bay of Plenty Conservation Board**

Ken Raureti informed Council that there would be three new members joining the Bay of Plenty Conservation Board. He advised that the Boards current key priorities/issues were;

- environmental restoration;
- whitebait habitat, and catching and selling of whitebait;

- Canada geese and complaints about their numbers in the Okareka, Rotomahana, and Tauranga areas;
- trails, including the Tarawera trail, and a lack of associated infrastructure such as toilets.

Ken noted that work is continuing on the Conservation Management Strategy and the first draft was expected to be completed by the end of August 2016 with the aim of implementation by the new Board in June 2017.

Bill Clark added that the Board had had significant input into wetlands at Tumurenu and Tumurau, and that they were hoping to generate enthusiasm for the harvest of Canada goose eggs in spring as a means of reducing populations.

**12.2 Tongariro -Taupo Conservation Board**

Colin Paton advised that trails were also an issue for the Tongariro-Taupo Board with the Tongariro crossing having reached capacity and more infrastructure being required there to accommodate the ever increasing number of visitors. Colin spoke briefly about the meeting over the proposed carp farm in Taupo and Contact Energy's subsequent withdrawal from this proposal, and noted that there seemed to be a swan problem at Stump Bay on Lake Taupo. Colin advised that today was his last meeting representing the Conservation Board and advised that Annaka Davis had been nominated and expected that Council would be informed of the new Board in May. Cr Murray Ferris thanked Colin for his work with the Board saying that he was always studious and kept Council very well informed. Murray noted that Colin had also previously been a member of this Council and his combined efforts and input over the years in these two roles was appreciated.

**12.3 East Coast/Hawke's Bay Conservation Board**

Not represented and no report received.

**12.4 Department of Conservation, Central and Lower North Island Regions**

Not represented and no report received.

**12.5 Report from the New Zealand Council**

A summary report of the March New Zealand Council meeting prepared by Robert Sowman was included in the Papers for Information. Cr Lindsay Lyons enlarged on these notes focussing in particular on licence sales, threats to Water Conservation Orders, the review of the Walking Access Act and work of the Commission, Northland Region's issues with the Kai Iwi lakes, recent didymo work which had seen some positive results, and the poor salmon runs to date this year which had affected licence sales in the South Island regions.

**13.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT**

**13.1** Cr Peter Storey requested an update on the catfish situation in Lake Rotoiti. Matt Osborne advised that there had been substantial work involving fyke netting and electric fishing and that to date 48-50 catfish had been caught from what appeared to be two age cohorts at Te Weta Bay. Matt would be meeting with Bay of Plenty Regional Council staff and other interested parties in about two weeks to review issues and options.

**13.2** Cr Lindsay Lyons queried whether the submission to close the Awahou Stream would reduce compliance issues in the area. Andy Garrick advised that we hoped it would do so by making offenders more detectable, and more likely to be reported and apprehended.

- 13.3 Cr Murray Ferris asked whether any results had been gained from the 500 datawatch tagged fish that had been released in Waikaremoana. Matt Osborne advised that these fish were not quite yet at an age or size where we would expect a return and we hadn't as yet. Cr Sandy Bull added that there had been very low returns from previous liberations.
- 13.4 Cr Murray Ferris commented on the interesting results arising from the analyses Eastern Region staff (Harri Condie and Matt McDougall) had undertaken of mallard band returns in Hawke's Bay. Andy Garrick advised that this was a repeat of modelling work that Matt had undertaken in the Eastern Region, and indicated that recruitment may be influenced by the preceding winter rainfall. This is a useful insight for the Eastern Region, particularly the East Coast.
- 13.5 Cr Barry Roderick asked whether ballot holders needed to sign off on the list of hazards and controls that we had recently sent them. Andy Garrick spoke about the new Health & Safety at Work Act which had recently come into effect, and in particular, changes to liability and responsibility. He said that there had been some concern raised around the liability of Councillors, and as a consequence a legal opinion had been sought (see April Papers for Information) which concluded that as volunteer officers individual Councillors were not liable. Cr Laurance Tamati queried overall responsibility i.e. as a Council as a whole? Andy Garrick advised that there was a lack of clarity in relation to some matters such as this, and WorkSafe's response to some issues had been it would need to be tested through the Courts. Andy advised that Carmel Veitch is co-ordinating a review of Health & Safety policies and procedures nationally, and advised that Health & Safety matters will be reported in greater detail in all future meetings of Council to ensure that Council is meeting its obligations. Cr David Woolner queried the implications on Fish & Game managed wetlands versus other locations such as lakes that we don't have a direct management input to. Andy said that what we have provided for balloted stand holders is possibly beyond what is required of us, although the fact that we have stand holders undertaking maintenance works that we have prescribed they need to do may have obligations that are more far reaching for us. Cr Annaka Davis highlighted the need to consider also, the situations where public are working with staff. Cr Laurance Tamati said we need to ensure that the changes needed to make us compliant are implemented, and noted his concern in relation to Councillors' liabilities, referencing items 32.1 and 32.7 of the legal opinion contained within the Papers for Information on pages 13 and 14. Andy Garrick confirmed that Eastern Region staff are looking at this very closely and in addition are collaborating with other regions and as an organisation as this is also critical.
- 13.6 *Agreed (Annaka Davis/Barry Roderick) that Council receives the Management, Finance, and Licence Sales Reports, and approves the payments for January and February 2016 totalling \$368,344.47. [16/04/13.6]***
- 13.7 Cr Lindsay Lyons requested that the finance and licence sales reports be brought forward within the agenda to sit prior to the management report as there was usually insufficient time to review these. Lindsay put forward a motion to this effect and this was seconded by Cr Sandy Bull. After further discussion it was agreed that the priorities section we usually have on the agenda could be reduced or dropped altogether to ensure that there was sufficient time to discuss all topics in greater detail if required. On this basis Crs Lindsay Lyons and Sandy Bull withdrew their motion.
- 13.8 Kate Thompson provided a brief overview of licence sales YTD noting that Eastern's sales were impacted by the reduced value of the day licence and the high uptake of the

local area licence. She noted that Eastern had actually gained adult anglers but this increase in participation within the region had been masked by the discounted categories that were now available.

**14.0 GENERAL BUSINESS**

14.1 Cr Murray Ferris asked Council to consider extending the allowable duration of Council meetings to four hours. He noted that council was not infrequently needing to pass a motion to extend meeting length, and suggested that Council aims for three hours, but meets for up to four hours if need be without having to resort to formally agreeing to do so on each occasion.

14.2 A motion to extend Council's standard meeting time to up to four hours where business requires it was put forward, seconded, and agreed to by Council. Retrospectively this has no formal standing as it was inadvertently considered under General Business but will be put on to the agenda of Council's next meeting in June.

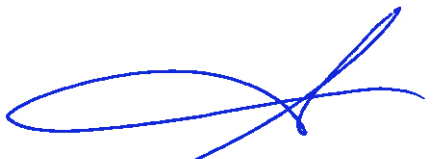
**15.0 PRESENTATION BY JENN SHEPPARD ON MALLARD RESEARCH**

15.1 Andy Garrick introduced Jenn Sheppard who had kindly agreed to give a presentation entitled "Researching Mallards in New Zealand: Breeding Season Vital Rates and Next Steps" to Council. Jenn has been conducting a PhD research programme supported by Fish & Game in the Waikato and Southland, and presented interim results gathered over the past two years.

15.2 A number of discussions took place during the course of the presentation, and on its conclusion Cr Murray Ferris thanked Jenn on behalf of the Council for her work in this area which was revealing some interesting and valuable insights into mallard breeding in today's environment.

**16.0 MEETING CLOSED**

16.1 The meeting was closed at 3.20pm.

  
.....  
**Murray Ferris,**  
**Chairman**

  
.....  
**Date**



## SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

### 2.0 APOLOGIES

- 2.2 *Agreed (Laurance Tamati/Neal Hawes) that the apologies for the 157th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [16/04/2.2]*

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