

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON
TUESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2016 AT 3.00PM AT HOTEL COACHMAN, 140 FITZHERBET
AVENUE, PALMERSTON NORTH**

1. Present:

Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Andrew Morris, Don Scott, Paul Shortis, Marc Flaws, Malcolm Francis, Chris O'Meara, Brad Johnson, Jim Cook, Andy Tannock, Simon Muckley, Dan Waechter

2. In Attendance:

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Steve Pilkington, Hamish Carnachan

Jenny Rowan Chairperson (Wellington Conservation Board), Jim Rainey (Conservation Board)

Bryce Johnson (NZF&G Council CE) (part)

Greg Carylton (part)

3. Apologies:

Councillors Eric Neumann, Andy Tannock (for lateness 4:15pm)

Licenceholder: Reg Cull

It was then moved that:

the apologies be accepted.

Brad Johnson/Malcolm Francis

Carried

4. Public Participation (A)

Chairman Cotsilinis introduced Jenny Rowan (Chairperson Wellington Conservation Board) who outlined the conservation advisory role of the Conservation Board, on behalf of the public, for the Wellington/Kapiti, Wairarapa and Manawatu regions and noted that the current conduits for information were Board members Don Adams and Jim Rainey.

5. Conflicts of Interest

A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of Interest. No new conflicts of interest were declared.

6. **Minutes of Previous Meeting of 23 August 2016**

After a brief discussion it was moved that:

the Minutes of the Meeting of Wellington Fish & Game Council of 23 August 2016 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Malcom Francis/Marc Flaws

Carried

After brief discussion it was moved that

The Minutes of the In-Committee Meeting of Wellington Fish & Game Council of 23 August 2016 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

Andrew Morris/Malcolm Francis

Carried

7. **Matters Arising**

Councillor Waechter confirmed that he had attended a consultation and interpretation meeting regarding the corridor use of the Hutt River and considered that Fish & Game needed to be included in the decision making and policy direction for recreation management of the river. Discussion ensued on how to educate landowners in the area with respect to protecting spawning habitat in streams such as the Mangaroa. It was considered appropriate for 2017 spawning period to produce an article for the local media or targeted letters on what key aspects can help protect a spawning system (from pollutants such as treated sewage, silt deposition, and other specific chemical pollutants). It was also considered worthwhile to investigate what options could be included on the Hutt River Trail and having a Fish & Game information layer added.

8. **NZ Council Business**

Councillor Morris provided feedback and report from the most recent NZ Council meeting on 23 September 2016

Councillor Morris confirmed that NZ Council had undertaken a NZ Council office review and that a new position would be advertised to assist the Policy and Planning Manager with administration issues and that the CE would reduce hours with the redistribution of resources.

Councillor Morris noted that the format for the Guides Licence had been agreed to with the Professional Guides Association and was being considered by the Minister for approval.

Councillor Morris noted that the meeting schedule for the NZ Council meetings had been approved with it planned to have a Wellington region focused field trip in November 2017.

Councillor Morris noted that the application by Hawke's Bay F&G for legal funding had been approved to seek clarification in the regional planning context on how to legally define a wetland.

Councillor Morris noted that NZ Council was proposing a nationally based project to document notification protocols of regional councils – i.e. what regional councils considered minor or non-notified consents – following some works that were undertaken in the Hakataramea valley area in the South Island. It was noted that Peter Wilson had already completed some background work on this issue when working for Otago Fish & Game Council.

It was then moved

That the report presented by Councillor Morris relating to the NZ Fish & Game Council meeting on 23 September 2016 be received

Chris O'Meara/Brad Johnson

Chairman Cotsilinis introduced new staff member Peter Wilson - the new Senior Environmental Planner. Mr Wilson gave an overview of his regional focus, and RMA work on regional planning issues and provided a brief summary of his background as a planner with Otago Fish & Game Council. He acknowledged that the catchment types in the North Island faced a different set of challenges for resource use than those in the lower South Island.

Greg Carlyon arrived at 3.20pm.

9. Public Participation (B)

Chairman Cotsilinis invited Jenny Rowan (Wellington Conservation Board) to provide some more in depth clarification of the role of the Conservation Board and how Fish & Game could interact with the Board. Ms Rowan noted that the Wellington Conservation Board had recently had several new appointees which had provided an opportunity to regroup and refocus. This included making sure the responsibilities as a Statutory board are considered such as: the responsibility for producing a Conservation Management Strategy (CMS); monitoring and advising DoC on work programmes following the adoption of the CMS, and being available to discuss matters of concern to the wider public. She noted that the CMS for Wellington region would be formally notified on 14 December 2016 with submissions being accepted until end of March 2017. Ms Rowan also noted that the recent Court of Appeal decision on the legality of transferring land from the DOC estate as a Forest Park was currently being assessed by the Department in terms of its wider implications.

Ms Rowan confirmed that Fish & Game is a statutory link, as is the Conservation Authority. She clarified that the Board didn't report to any one person but can have access to the Minister, and as such aren't necessarily constrained by departmental operations issues.

Chairman Cotsilinis thanked Ms Rowan for her explanations and reiterated the desire for continuing and appropriate dialogue.

Bryce Johnson (NZ F&GC CE) arrived at 3.30pm

Chairman Cotsilinis invited Greg Carlyon (Catalyst Group) to provide a summary section 274 interested parties he had been involved with, regarding the filing of the Declaratory Judgment with the Environment Court regarding the implementation of Horizons Regional Council's One Plan Regional Plan. Mr Carlyon provided his observations on the process to date from its inception, hearings, and court cases that arrived at the rules to be implemented, including: the general principles of setting values for waterbodies and developing methods including (but not limited to) regulation to drive sustainable management, and potential for other regional councils to ignore rules developed through rigorous planning processes. He considered that the s274 parties were interested in the plan being implemented as agreed to through the legal processes (including a huge amount of supporting technical evidence) - and if it doesn't work then changes to the plan implementation should be undertaken transparently with all sections of the community, with potentially an independent oversight of implementation to maintain confidence. He considered that the current legal mechanism to seek a Declaratory Judgment from the Environment Court was objective and appropriate in seeking clarity on how the plan has been implemented and if that has been lawful.

Councillor Tannock arrived at 4:00pm.

Chairman Cotsilinis considered that the provisions in the One Plan were developed through a statutory and reasoned process and that Horizons were legally obliged to implement the rules.

Mr Carlyon left the meeting at 4:05pm.

10. Health & Safety Update

Mr Teal confirmed to Council that a draft template for a Health and Safety Plan had been adapted for Wellington region's requirements and a copy would be presented to Council at the December meeting to illustrate its development to date.

11. 2017 Wellington Fish & Game Council Meeting Dates

Council considered the meeting dates available and confirmed the principles of: holding the meetings on a Tuesday, similar dates to 2016 that match NZFGC and Manager meetings, and that the meetings would continue to circulate around the three regional urban centres.

Mr Teal undertook to provide a draft Calendar for 2017 meeting dates for the December meeting for confirmation.

12. Preliminary Recommendations for 2017 Game Regulations

Discussion ensued on the options document for setting game regulations presented by staff to consider options and potential further information needs prior to the December Council Meeting.

Mallard: Discussion ensued on the results of the transect counts which indicated a lower average than 2015 but conflicted with an increase trend in harvest from 2014-16. It was considered that the precautionary approach to set conditions at 8 birds and 8 weeks was appropriate for 2016 and could be considered for 2017 to maintain some consistency but also ensure the obligation of sustaining numbers of birds.

It was considered it would be useful to undertake another email survey to get feedback from hunters on options for season conditions:

- 8 weeks 8 birds per day limit;
- 6 weeks 8 birds per day limit;
- 8 weeks 6 birds per day limit;
- 6 weeks 6 birds per day limit.

Mr Teal noted that there was no momentum to nationally move to a limit of three shots for multi-shot shotguns as it was generally not supported as a restriction in the South Island. Councillor Tannock sought clarification on Wellington hunters' feedback and would be a useful question for the email survey. It was also seen as useful to get feedback from the survey on Fish & Game's involvement and personal hunter commitment to predator control programmes.

Season conditions were briefly considered for other species:

- Trend flight results were required for black swan and paradise shelduck;
- Pheasant - confirm no hens
- Bobwhite quail – consider taking off licence unless at sites with special hunting conditions;
- Red-legged partridge – consider having a one bird limit per day

Jenny Rowan left the meeting at 4:30pm

13. Angling Ethics – Catch and Release

Discussion ensued on memorandum from paper Angling Ethics Catch & Release by Robert Sowman (NZ F&GC Policy and Planning Manager) 26 July 2016 as to whether to develop a policy on the ethics of catch and release fishing.

Mr Teal referred to an email from Councillor Eric Neumann who indicated he did not support the West Coast proposal to limit catch and release numbers, considering it was potentially a local issue not warranting development of national policy. He considered the perceived issue of guides exploiting the catch and release technique are not backed up by his experiences where they manage the issues so as not to over-fish areas where they know fish are reliably holding. He considered that not enough empirical evidence had been collected to suggest that this was a significant issue beyond perceptions from a few sites.

Council considered it was not practical to have a policy for a total in catch and release numbers per day but considered better education on how to release fish, and sensitive handling of fish would be a better approach.

Councillors noted a range of opportunities to target education of anglers:

- Taupo Fishery information was good education material on which to base future publicity –
- sent out as information sheet with plastic licence;
- guidelines for releasing on website;
- ethics page in fishing booklet;
- Guidelines for best practice catch and release practice in Wellington F&G's newsletter.

It was agreed to include an article on ethics and good practice of catch and release be included in the upcoming WF&G Fish Newsletter

14. Project Reports 2015/16

Chairman Cotsilinis confirmed that all the project reports would be consider in order with points of clarification provided as requested:

- **Project Report 1111 - Sports Fish Population Monitoring:** no clarification sought;
- **Project Report 1111A – Trout Spawning Report:** no clarification sought;

- **Project Report 1112 – Rangitikei River Trout Fishery Management.** (This project report was received by Council 7 June 2016): silt in the Mowhanga River was identified as a potential issue even after flushing events.

Jim Rainey left the meeting at 4.55pm

- **Project Report 1113 – River Control Fishery Assessment.** (This project report was received by Council 7 June 2016):
- **Project Report 1114 - Game Bird Population Assessments:** no clarification sought;
- **Project Report 1114A - Banding Report:** no clarification sought;
- **Project Report 1121: National Hunter Harvest Survey:** no clarification sought;
- **Project Report 1124: Regional Hunter Survey:** (i) Opinions: clarification - the number of hunters using sub (12) gauge shotguns on opening weekend was 7% which is a slight decrease on previous year's results (8%).
- **Project Report 1124: Regional Hunter Survey:** (ii) Parangarahu Lakes: no clarification sought;
- **Project Report 1124: Regional Hunter Survey:** (iii) Baring Head: no clarification sought;
- **Project Report 1181: Game Bird Dispersal:** no clarification sought;
- **Project Report 1114B – NZ Shoveler Duck 2016:** no clarification sought;

The meeting was adjourned at 5.00pm to allow for a presentation and allow for free and frank discussions with Horizons Regional Council representatives – Chairman Bruce Gordon, Chief Executive Michael McCartney, Nic Peet Group Manager, Strategy and Regulations regarding the Declaratory Judgement sought to clarify the implementation of the One Plan Regional Plan rules relating to nutrient allocation. The meeting was reconvened at 5.50pm – it was noted that a telephone was left at the site and subsequently retrieved.

- **Project Report 1211A: RMA Environmental Managers Report:** no clarification sought;
- **Project Report 1313: Lake Wairarapa Hunter Access Permits /Wainuiomata Permits:** no clarification sought;
- **Project Report Communications incorporating:**
 - **Project 1331: Newsletter:** no clarification sought;
 - **Project 1341: Communication to Clients:** no clarification sought;
 - **Project 1441: Public Awareness:** no clarification sought;

- **Project Report 1351: Hunter Training, Lake Omanu:** health and safety equipment (life jackets) had been purchased for the participants;
- **Project 1354 Junior Angling:** clarification sought that the site at the Royal Wellington Golf Club might be operational for 2016/17 and the issue of predation by shags had reduced the number of fish affecting the viability of the site as a fish out area;
- **Project Report 1521 and 1531: Rangers and Compliance:** Continued appreciation to all of the honorary rangers for their efforts;
- **Project Report: Fish Licence Sales:** a brief discussion on licence sales (LEQs), and participation increase, being primarily due to new discounted licence category options;
- **Project Report: Game Licence Sales:** no clarification sought;
- **Project 1611 Licence Agents Annual Report:** no clarification sought;
- **Project Report: Occupational Safety and Health Annual Review :** no clarification sought;

Chairman Cotsilinis congratulated staff on the efforts in the field work, communications effort, and the professional report writing.

It was then moved that

The project reports for 2016 be received

Malcolm Francis/Andrew Morris

Carried

15. Wairarapa Water Irrigation Project Update

Messrs Teal and Carnachan noted that a key issue remained the adverse environmental effects of the intended intensification of pastoral farming and the effect on life-supporting capacity in the river, including trout fisheries.

Wellington Fish & Game recently (mid-September) commissioned an independent economic assessment report (by Peter Fraser of Ropere Consultants) to provide more surety on the likely land-use changes that would result from such a large-scale irrigation project, and their likely environmental impact. Mr Fraser used the documents used to apply for funding from the Irrigation Acceleration Fund for ~\$800,000 using a dairy payout of over \$7 per kg milk solids. The initial economic analyses were heavily based on dry stock converting to dairy (up to 55% increase in dairy), the economic modelling seems to have continued on the basis of this assumption and the then prevailing financial factors, despite the subsequent crash in the dairy pay-out. Mr Fraser has exposed this and received considerable media coverage.

It was intended to look at Water Wairarapa's latest land use assessments (just released) which also assess the proposed project's viability to realistically get an indication of land use types that may result. It is assumed that the consideration of the environmental impact by the project directors and regional council will be well into the advanced feasibility assessment process.

After discussion it was moved that

Council receive the report on the work on Wairarapa Water Update

Paul Shortis/Marc Flaws

Carried

16. Lake Wairarapa Moana Update

Mr Teal and Mr Bryce Johnson (NZF&GC CE) gave a brief overview of process by which the details of the Treaty Settlement are being dealt with. There is a meeting proposed with the Office of Treaty Settlements officials (including the OTS Crown negotiator Rick Barker) and representatives of Rangitaane and Kahungunu iwi for late October. Discussion will focus on the letter from the Office of Treaty Settlements dated April 2016 specifically noting the proposed establishment of a Statutory Board and sustainability of fisheries.

It was considered prudent after that meeting to raise any concerns or changes to the current negotiation process that Fish & Game considers are required, and inform the Minister of Treaty Settlements, Department of Conservation, and NZ Fish & Game Council.

It was agreed

That following the meeting with Treaty Settlement negotiators that a letter be drafted to the Minister of Treaty Settlements outlining Fish & Game's expectations of outcomes and any concerns with the negotiation process

Chris O'Meara/Marc Flaws

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 6:15pm for dinner and reconvened at 6:50pm

17. Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions

Mr Teal noted that he had confirmed with the operators that they intended to continue with similar scale operations for the 2017 game season, and is awaiting confirmation of their final draft of their seasonal operational plans.

18. Mallard Research Project

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the mallard research projects with initiatives to look at mustelid and predator movements within rural landscapes in Southland.

He also confirmed that analyses are being undertaken by a Massey University student to look potential heavy metal accumulation (including lead) in the blood that may affect fecundity. a priority research project for next year.

Findings from the PhD programme funded by the Fish & Game research fund will direct future research and/or management actions.

19. Junior Angler Participation – Fish in Schools

Discussion ensued on increasing sharing of information to participants, increased direction for volunteer supervisors, and stronger engagement with clubs. This would be discussed by the working group of councillors tasked to look at opportunities to refine and potentially sustainably grow the Fish in Schools programme.

20. Management Report 1 August -30 September 2016

Mr Teal noted that staff were waiting on Cawthron Institute to provide their interpretation of the analyses of the otolith microchemistry assessments to determine the work programme for sampling for 2017 summer period.

After discussion it was moved that

The management report for 1 August – 30 September 2016 be received.

Malcolm Francis/Don Scott

Carried

21. Fish & Game Licence Sales

Mr Teal gave overview of the licence sales for fish were over 10% down on previous year's sales at the same period (late Septemeber), and there were several reasons postulated included inclement weather conditions causing a delay in purchase. He also noted that most agents were now agency-on-line which provided an up-to-date assessment of sales.

After further discussion it was moved

The Fish Licence Sales report as at 23 September 2016 be received

Don Scott/Mach Flaws

Carried

22. Expenditure Report

After discussion it was moved that

the Expenditure Report for 31 August 2016 and Financial Transactions for July and August 2016 be approved

Jim Cook/Andrew Morris

Carried

It was noted that the licence sales income figure had been incorrectly transposed on the Statement of Income and Expenditure.

23. Correspondence

Discussion ensued on an email from Roger Smaile who reiterated that Fish & Game need to take licenceholder engagement in elections seriously. Council considered various initiatives to engage licenceholders – and it was acknowledged that Fish & Game needed to continue with efforts to publicise the democratic options to licenceholders with regular newsletters and promote further and regularly.

After further discussion it was moved to

Correspondence and Media reports for July – August 2016 be received

Don Scott/Malcolm Francis

Carried

Steve Pilkington left the meeting at 7.20pm

24. General Business

Councillor Muckley encouraged all Councillors to take an active role in projects to make a contributions that leverage off the policy direction and operational capabilities of the organisation.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 7.26pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Masterton Cosmopolitan Club, Queen Street, Masterton, Tuesday 6 December 2016 at 3.00pm.

Chairman _____

Date _____

