

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF

If you require further elaboration or clarification of items contained herein, or any other matters relating to F&GC business, please don't hesitate to contact your local ward councillor or the office

Matters Arising from the Council Meeting of 17 August 2019

- Councillor Annan passed on the congratulations of the Te Awamutu Fish & Game Association to the Chairman Murray Young on having the wetland at Evans Rd named after him. The Association considered the honour was well deserved given Mr Young's many years of service to the Council and conservation.
- Letters were tabled from:
 - Lindsay Lyons, Chairman NZF&GC, inviting the Chairman to a one-day workshop in November 2019. The Chairman informed the meeting that Councillor Annan had agreed to attend on his behalf.
 - NZF&GC requesting feedback on the proposed dates to set licence fees in 2020 and beyond, which would require regional councils to have their June meeting in the middle two weeks of that month. Councillors agreed that having a meeting in early/mid June was already standard practice and that they had no objection to the NZF&GC's request. Councillor Juby recommended that where practical all Council meetings should be scheduled at least two weeks after the NZF&GC meetings.
 - Kurt Bayer, Senior Reporter NZ Herald, with a request made under the OIA regarding interaction between F&G and Federated Farmers since the November 2018 F&G elections. Mr Wilson noted that all the requested emails had been forwarded to Mr Bayer.
 - Benesia Smith, Executive Director MNZM, requesting information that would assist the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the attack of Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019.
- The meeting discussed the financial threats facing Fish & Game over the next 5 years, especially funding the new staff positions in the smaller regions.
- Councillor Juby spoke on the minutes of the 7-8 June 2019 meeting of the NZF&GC, especially the initiative of the National Council to seek alternative forms of revenue. Councillors agreed that a bequest policy would only be successful if potential donors could be assured that their bequests would only be spent in specified regions and/or nominated projects.
- Councillor Juby stated that he was unable to attend NZF&GC meetings for the rest of the year and offered his resignation as NZ Councillor. The Chairman asked for nominations for the position of NZ Councillor but no nominations were offered. It was agreed that Councillor Juby's resignation as NZ Councillor be declined but Council acknowledged that Councillor Juby would be unable to attend NZF&GC meetings for the rest of the year.
- Councillor Annan reported that he had recently attended a meeting of the Hamilton F&G Association whose members had enquired whether Council could provide some form of assistance to COLFO (Council of licenced firearms owners). It was agreed that this would be inappropriate given the Council's status as a Crown Entity.

Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report

Auckland Airport: Staff met with representatives from the Airport Authority to discuss the issues they are experiencing with game birds, mainly swan, and the ongoing requirement to conduct culls. The authority sees swan as a significant and ongoing hazard and new runway extension is likely to exacerbate the issue. Swan are attracted by sea grass which is proliferating in areas around the harbour leading to an influx of swan in that area. Various research and management options are being considered as joint projects.

Trout releases: Trout releases were carried out at Lakes Moana-nui, Whatihua and Parkinson.

Sterile fish project: Adam Daniel and Eastern region staff successfully spawned and treated Fish & Game's first batch of sterile trout.

Plant Distribution 2019: This year's annual order was received and distributed to clubs and individual wetland or stream projects.

Healthy Rivers: The Hearings for the Healthy Rivers Plan Change have recently been completed. Our efforts were coordinated by Anna Sintenie, and evidence was presented by Dr Adam Daniels, David Klee and Ben Wilson. We also employed a range of experts in specialised fields who presented evidence on our behalf. Evidence was presented on three days, and generally we received a very positive reception from the commissioners who asked numerous questions. We also contributed to the expert conferencing that ran parallel to the Hearings; these were groups of experts in their field who provided advice to the commissioners. We were fortunate in having the expertise of Dr Adam Canning (Wellington Fish and Game) who gave evidence and contributed to the expert conferencing.

Waikato District Plan: Further submissions were filed on the proposed Waikato District Plan. We were particularly concerned over applications by submitters who were seeking to rezone rural land adjacent to wetlands and lakes to residential or industrial. For example, one submitter is requesting that the land next to our North Shepherd Wetland is changed to an industrial zoning. Another wants the land between the Cathcart and the Blythen Wetlands zoned residential. These applications usually gave little or no consideration to potential environmental impacts despite proposing dense residential housing and/or large industrial areas.

Fonterra Te Rapa: We had several meetings with Fonterra to discuss the renewal of their consents for the Te Rapa factory. We withdraw our objection after acknowledging that Fonterra had addressed our main concern that the proposed compliance limits were higher than the current performance. We also consider that the proposed mitigation package is generous of \$100,000 and we look forward to working with Fonterra on potential projects in the catchment.

Impact of proposed Waikato District Plan on Fish & Game wetlands: Under the proposed Waikato District Plan most of our wetlands are zoned as significant natural areas and thus earthworks are limited to the following:

(a) Earthworks for the maintenance of existing tracks, fences or drains within an identified

Significant Natural Area must not:

- (i) Exceed a volume of 50m³ in a single consecutive 12 month period;
- (ii) Exceed an area of 250m² in a single consecutive 12 month period;
- (iii) Import any fill material.

We will be seeking a consent application to cover the routine maintenance work in our wetlands. We are also seeking changes to the proposed district plan via our submission as previously noted.

Conference in USA: Dr Adam Daniel recently gave a talk at the American Fisheries Society East Coast Trout conference on his research in the upper Whanganui catchment.