

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF

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

Matters arising from the Council Meeting of 13 November 2021

1. The following positions were elected:
 - Chairman: Nigel Juby
 - Vice-Chairman: David Cocks
 - Vice-Chairman: Grant Annan
 - NZ Councillor: Barrie Barnes
 - Land & Water Habitat Trustee: Colin Sherrard
2. Considerable discussion on the proposed Structure Review Project. Councillors expressed concerns that they were being asked to make decisions without adequate understanding of the operational and financial implications of the proposed changes, including the liabilities of the Northland Council. Concern was also expressed at the lack of consultation with licence holders. Mr Wilson was asked to prepare a report on the financial and operational implications of potential amalgamations and boundary changes for the February meeting of Council.
3. Council's application for comprehensive maintenance consents for its wetlands has been delayed due to the obligations imposed by the new National Environmental Standards for Freshwater wetland regulations. Furthermore Council lacks a good understanding of the values of the vegetation and habitats of its wetland properties. It was agreed that a wetland ecologist be employed on a temporary contract to survey Council's properties.
4. It was agreed that staff prepare a report giving the options for potential changes to the season length and limits for 2022 season. A special meeting of Council to be held in December to consider the report.
5. The following meeting schedule for 2022 was approved:
 - 26th February
 - 19th March
 - 11th June
 - 20th August
 - 14th October
 - 10th December

The February meeting to include a field trip to the Lake Waikare/Whangamarino system including Council's weir on the Whangamarino River given that this was an area where much of Council's efforts and expenditure was occurring.

6. COVID-19 guidelines are to be prepared for Council properties, including QR codes at all entrances.
7. It was agreed that Council should budget for an additional 1,000 2yr rainbow trout in 2022/23. The actual locations for the release of these fish to be determined at a later date.

Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report

Gamebird Management: David Klee has prepared a short report which gives an overview of the Council's policies, monitoring and research information and how it can be used in the decision-making process for setting harvest regulations for game birds in the Auckland/Waikato Region. This report is available on the Fish & Game website (Auckland/Waikato staff reports).

Auckland trout fisheries: The Covid lockdowns have put a considerable amount of pressure on Auckland's lake fisheries. The extra 2-year-old browns put in Parkinson's Lake have been very popular and Quarry Lake continues to fish well.

Tatua Dairy Company Consent application: We submitted on the application by Tatua Dairy Company for their wastewater discharge to land. We're concerned with the validity of data, especially the accuracy of the nutrient leaching rates and proposed application rates.

Wetland submission: Mischa Davis prepared a submission on behalf of the national Fish and Game Council on the proposed changes to the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater wetland regulations. We raised concerns that there have been no changes proposed regarding wetland utility structures meaning the construction of maimai, a boardwalk or even a sign in a wetland requires a resource consent (including wetlands on private land). Any wetland restoration work, even minor work such as removing weeds or planting native species, still requires notifying the relevant regional council and any follow up monitoring of these activities by the council may incur fees. Fulfilling the many requirements that apply to wetland restoration under the regulations will discourage landowners and agencies from conducting wetland restoration activities.

Lake Waikare Water Levels; David provided some feedback regarding the need to maintain water levels near their maximum targeted levels leading into summer to avoid the lake sitting below its targeted minimum levels during dry summers which are becoming more prevalent.

Game Bird Habitat Trust Projects: All of the projects David Klee is working on with landowners were successful in securing their full allocation of funding from the Game Bird Habitat Trust and billion trees. Many of these projects had previously secured partial funding from WRC, WRA, WCEET and significant landowner contributions. By securing funding from various sources in concert with our partners it allows us to use funding as a seed source and further leverage. In total just over \$140,000 was secured for dam construction, weir construction and planting from the Game Bird Habitat Trust.

- **Rumball Healy Project; Punga Punga Wetland:**

Total project value: \$403,000

Partnership Agencies: Waikato Regional Council, Waikato RiverCare, Waikato River Authority

Area of wetland to be created: 12 ha mainly ephemeral wetland.

- **Shaun and Michelle Good. Waitomo Wetland:**

Total project value: \$103,726

Partnership Agencies: Fonterra have pledged to supply 1000 plants to the project.

Area of wetland to be created: 2 dams creating approximately 0.6 ha of open water

- **Peter Walters: Kawhia Wetland Project:**

Total project value: \$79,600

Partnership Agencies: Unfortunately the sites falls outside of priority areas for other partners

Area of wetland to be created: 1 ha mainly ephemeral wetland.

- **Bryce Hazlitt: Mangapiko Wetland Project:**

Total project value: \$202,393

Partnership Agencies: Waikato RiverCare, WCEET, Waikato Regional Council

Area of wetland to be created: 5.3 ha mainly ephemeral wetland.

Access negotiation: Adam Daniel has finished the access trail at the Whenuatupu-Ohinemoa Trust property along the Waimiha River and checked in with landowners who are happy with the signage. Further work will need to be done to potentially open access to the river from the road.