

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL,
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 JUNE 2012 AT 3.05PM AT THE MASTERTON
COSMOPOLITAN CLUB, 398 QUEEN STREET, MASTERTON.**

1. Present:

Councillors Andrew Morris, Strato Cotsilinis, Richard Moore, Jim Cook, Tim Allen, Andy Tannock,

2. In Attendance:

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Steve Pilkington, Nic Cudby

John Hancock (Wellington/Hawke's Bay Conservation Board)

Licenceholders: Paul Browne (part), Ian Denton (part), Kevin Crawford, John Pansters (part)

3. Apologies:

Chairman Martin Taylor, Councillors Duncan Thomas, Brad Johnson, Mark Grace, Eric Neumann, Chris O'Meara

Staff: Corina Jordan

Other: Ric Cullinane (Walking Access Commission)

Mr Teal informed that Chairman Martin Taylor had tendered an apology and confirmed that a quorum was present.

Mr Teal called for nominations for an interim acting Chairman to conduct meeting business:

Councillor Strato Cotsilinis

Andy Tannock/Richard Moore

There being no further nominations Councillor Cotsilinis was declared interim Chair for the meeting,

It was then moved that:
the apologies be accepted.

Andy Tannock/Richard Moore

Carried

4. **Conflicts of Interest**

A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of Interest. There was no additional declaration of Conflicts of Interests declared.

5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting of 18 April 2012:**

After brief discussion it was moved that:

the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 18 April 2012 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Jim Cook/Richard Moore

Carried

6. **Matters Arising:**

Mr Teal informed Council that contestable funding application for a junior fishing and hunting programme that established a dedicated staff position was not successful in the Managers/CE recommendations in the budget considerations.

Mr Pilkington advised that circumstances for the individual who had made a request for stocking of private pond may have changed, and that he was not aware that he still wished to pursue the project. Councillor Morris indicated that local anglers had expressed their view on this concept with a preference for these types of sites to be open to the public at all times.

7. **Operational Process for Confirming Minutes**

Mr Teal confirmed that the draft unconfirmed minutes would be sent to all Councillors within five working days of the meeting, and then Councillors present at the meeting were afforded an opportunity to ask for clarification, request minor changes, or note a significant disagreement with the accuracy of the draft unconfirmed minutes. He reiterated that comments should be focused on the accuracy of the draft minutes. If, after minor changes, general agreement of all Councillors is confirmed, the draft unconfirmed minutes can then be posted on the website as unconfirmed minutes.

Mr Teal also suggested the possibility of a “newsbrief” which could be sent to clubs which gave a summary of Council decisions, and a summary of management activities. He indicated he would provide a draft Newsbrief to Councillors prior to distribution for confirmation.

8. **National Council Business:**

Councillor Morris gave a brief overview of the NZ Council meeting held on 25 May 2012. He briefly discussed the Mallard Research Programme that was endorsed by NZ Council and indicated agreement to use an independent

external co-ordinator. NZ Council also indicated its appreciation of Southland F&GC's offer to contribute funding from its reserves to the Research Fund.

The Licence Fee Recommendation was discussed by NZ Council with concern expressed to keep any fee increase to a minimum when considering contestable fund applications and legal funding. The proposed recommendation is the subject of a later agenda item as part of the regional consultation.

Eastern F&GC had produced a report on fish licence sales review including potential changes to licences available and potential concern of price inelasticity in short term licence category (eg. 24 hour licence % AWS vs fixed price) and its effect on boat-based fisheries.

The non-resident fish licence was discussed at NZ Council meeting and a letter from the Minister provides the basis for discussion in a later agenda item.

Councillor Morris was seeking feedback regarding Eastern F&GC request to review mileage rates. It was agreed that mileage rates should be tagged against a Government Index and that Councillors were satisfied with how this was currently conducted.

Councillor Morris noted that NZ Council had timetabled a Remuneration Committee Meeting and sought clarification as to Wellington F&GC's regular review.

Mr Kevin Crawford arrived at 3.25pm

Councillor Morris confirmed that the legal advice from Mai Chen (Chen Palmer) on conflicts of interest had not been released but indicated that policy may result out of considerations of conflicts of interest as they apply to F&G governors.

Councillor Morris indicated that the NZ Council CE is investigating the interpretation of 'navigability' in terms of the Coals Mine Act and its application in terms of considering river bed ownership under the *ad medium filum* presumption.

The acting President of Federation of Freshwater Anglers Doug Stevens gave a talk about common interests and goals.

It was then moved that

That the report from Councillor Morris on NZ Council Meeting held on 25 May 2012 be received

Richard Moore/Andy Tannock

Carried

9. Dedicated Reserves For Reparation

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the reparation policy and the use of dedicated reserves by other regional F&GCs to ensure funds are targeted at the resource and/or compliance.

It was then moved that

A dedicated reserve be formed for funds derived from compliance reparation and that those funds be focused on habitat and compliance items.

Andrew Morris/Andy Tannock

Carried

10. National Licencing Service Agreement Proposal

Agenda item deferred until later in meeting

11. Open Public Forum

Acting Chairman Cotsilinis then afforded public licenceholder attendees an opportunity to speak to Council.

Mr Crawford indicated that as Matthews Lagoon standholder he had concerns regarding raupo encroachment. Mr Teal explained the situation regarding restrictions on preferred control methods and the continued willingness of Fish & Game to pursue beneficial wetland management outcome.

Mr Browne sought information on where the funds for goose management had been reallocated. Acting Chairman Cotsilinis noted that it had been allocated to projects involving mallard research, habitat works and resource consents.

Mr Browne sought information on the possibility of an over 65yr licence as there had been some interest from licenceholders – even for a token discount. Mr Teal explained that there was currently a licence category options review being undertaken and that this option is under consideration.

Mr Browne reiterated concerns made by Mr Crawford about raupo encroachment which had made access to some sites on Boggy Pond difficult especially for older hunters. Councillor Tannock noted that occupancy requirements were under review, and there could be consideration of occupants to be given a period of time to clear raupo from around their hunting positions.

Mr Browne sought clarification of the arrangements of DoC concession fees for Kilmore Lodge. Acting Chairman Cotsilinis brought to the attention of Mr Browne that Wairarapa Moana governance group had proposed to establish a

walking/cycle track out to the lake edge and around Boggy Pond. Mr Teal confirmed that funding had been sought but only partially funded (~\$20,000) for the bridge allowing access to the lake edge.

12. Licence Fee Recommendation 2012/13

The paper prepared by Jenny Norris (NZ Council Finance and Administration Manager) provided the basis for discussion on a licence fee recommendation for 2012/13. Acting Chairman Cotsilinis outlined the key points for discussion to either support the recommendation or provide an alternative licence fee with appropriate justifications. Councillor Morris noted that increases above CPI will be progressively more difficult to get approval by the Minister, and it may be prudent to be aligned with CPI increases. Councillor Moore also expressed that regular increases were becoming increasingly difficult to persuade fish licenceholders of the value of the licence increases unless there were some special projects. Councillor Allen reiterated these sentiments regarding gamebird hunters. Acting Chairman Cotsilinis noted that the operating costs continue to increase and licence fees were the principal income base.

Councillor Tannock considered that while the average licenceholders could afford the proposed modest increases, he suggested it needed to be better justified – e.g. an increase in licence fee for funds for mallard research is addressing concerns relating to perceived lack of numbers. He further considered that the average angler could be accepting of a licence fee increase if it were targeted at the legal fund to achieve significant gains to protect trout habitat. It was generally agreed that Fish & Game needed to convey the reasons for increases to the licence fee and explain where the money goes.

After further discussion it was moved that

Wellington Fish & Game Council would support the proposed licence fee recommendation of \$120 Wholeseason Adult Fishing and \$90 Wholeseason Adult Gamebird Hunting, with the increase in gamebird fee be tagged to gamebird research and that adequate publicity is undertaken to explain the fee increases

Richard Moore/Andy Tannock
Carried

13. Non Resident Fishing Licence

The letter from the Minister of Conservation to NZ Council Chairman (28 May 2012) and the Departmental submission paper (24 April 2012) provided basis for discussion

After discussion it was moved that

Wellington Fish & Game Council would reaffirm their general support for the initiative to introduce a non-resident fishing licence as outlined in the Departmental submission paper DOC DM933284

Andrew Morris/Andy Tannock
Carried

14. Draft Anglers Notice 2012/13

Mr Pilkington outlined the two changes – the limit being requested by anglers on the Mangatoro River , and protection of all spawning streams of the Pohangina River.

After discussion it was moved that

A one fish limit be applied to the Mangatoro River for the 2012/13 season

Andy Tannock/Jim Cook
Carried

It was also moved that

all tributaries to the Pohangina River be open from 1 October to 30 April for the 2012/13 season

Richard Moore/Andy Tannock
Carried

It was further moved that

The draft anglers notice (including the changes above) be affirmed for the 2012/113 season

Tim Allen/Andrew Morris
Carried

Councillor Tannock sought clarification on the use of soft baits which contained some chemical preparation within – for use where (natural) bait fishing is allowed. Mr Teal was requested to seek clarification on any specific rulings from other regions and NZ F&GC but it appeared that chemical preparations could not be used in areas that were open to fly and/or lure and bait – with no specific bait only areas.

Acting Chairman Cotsilinis sought clarification on the Anglers Notice regarding the ability to use one rod while fishing and have one rod assembled on the bank - which was particularly relevant for fishing competitions. NZF&GC had given an interpretation that an angler could have more than one rod assembled but only be fishing with not more than one rod.

15. Sports Fish Population Monitoring – Project Report 1111

Mr Pilkington gave an overview of the drift dive counts undertaken over summer noting an increase in numbers for the regularly monitored “core river sections”. Acting Chairman Cotsilinis commended the efforts of staff to conduct the drift dives considering the often adverse weather and river conditions.

It was then moved

That the Sports Fish Population Monitoring Project Report 1111 be received

Richard Moore/Andrew Morris

Carried

16. Rangitikei River Trout Fishery Management – Project Report 1112

Mr Pilkington gave a brief overview of the issues and work that had been conducted on the Rangitikei River including:

- Backcountry licence summary
- Electric fishing survey curtailed as weather in January not conducive
- Compliance work not completed due to weather and co-ordination of team
- Tagging guns procured – with some fishing clubs getting some practice on local waters (Wellington Flyfishing Club indicated willingness to assist)

It was then moved

That the Rangitikei River Trout Fishery Management Project Report 1112 be received

Richard Moore/Jim Cook

Carried

17. River Control Fishery Assessment – Project Report 1113

Mr Pilkington gave a brief overview of the drift dive results and noted an increase in the Hutt River numbers after five years of relatively low numbers. Acting Chairman Cotsilinis noted that there had not been forestry activities affecting spawning in the Pakuratahi Forest area, and there had not been large floods in the last few years.

It was then moved

That the River Control Fishery Assessment Project Report 1113 be received

Tim Allen/Jim Cook

Carried

Mr Pansters arrived at 5pm

18. One Plan Update

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the One Plan proceedings confirming that the hearings for Surface Water Quality had concluded on 7 June 2012, and that final legal submissions would be made in writing only by 15 June 2012. He explained that Fish & Game had put up a very good case with the available

experts and legal counsel - with the Regional Council aligning with Fish & Game on factual basis on many issues.

Messrs Browne and Denton left the meeting at 5.15pm

19. PCE Report – Hydroelectricity or Wild Rivers

The report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment provided basis for discussion. The importance of Water Conservation Orders was noted and acknowledged that their status has been questioned in other situations around New Zealand. Mr Teal indicated that Wellington Fish & Game would take an active role in promoting WCOs in the Wellington region – including magazine supplement articles, and signage

20. Mallard Research Proposals

Mr Teal gave an overview of each of the proposed projects and endorsed by NZ Council. These include four main projects:

- 1. Standardising Monitoring Techniques of Population Change**
A paired treatment of monitoring techniques will be undertaken in six regions to determine variation in population change estimate and determine a technique(s) fit for purpose.
- 2. Defining Mallard Habitat Characteristics For Recruitment – “Research by Management”**
An experimental design is proposed that tests the key habitat parameters for mallard population recruitment with a ‘research by management’ approach.
- 3. Determining Mallard Productivity Using GPS Telemetry**
An observational project using GPS telemetry tags is proposed to assess productivity and the effect of zero hens (unsuccessful at producing young) with a view to informing on a universal monitoring approach.
- 4. Modeling Regulation Effectiveness**
Formal peer review is required of recent analyses of banding data from one region and, if robust, is required to be replicated in other regions.

Mr Teal explained the principles used in establishing costings which involved internalising some of these to regions as their contribution. This would require regions to allocation resources, mainly in terms of staff time.

After discussion it was moved that

Wellington Fish & Game Council confirm support for the projects proposed to NZ Council

Andy Tannock/Tim Allen
Carried

It was then moved that

Wellington Fish & Game Council will commit to undertaking research as part of the proposed research programme - with associated internal staff costs and potential modest external costs

Richard Moore/Andrew Morris
Carried

Mr Teal gave an overview of how potentially the projects would be co-ordinated. After discussion it was moved that

Wellington Fish & Game Council would commit staff time for NZ Council co-ordination of projects as internal co-ordination is required – particularly until an external co-ordinator is appointed.

Andrew Morris/Andy Tannock
Carried

Further discussion ensued on how others could be involved – such as club members and volunteers.

Councillor Tannock noted that the Waterfowl Enhancement Trust would most likely be interested in contributing to predator control aspects of this research. He noted that the Trust has already committed to projects in Auckland/Waikato (Blythen block), Hawke’s Bay (Peka Peka swamp), and Nelson Marlborough (Para swamp) and this could help confirm that the management activity of predator control is robust in achieving meaningful results.

Further discussion was held on potential funding options for the GPS equipment including individual sponsorship of each tracker or corporate sponsorship of several tracking units. The potential educational value of having tracking results on a website was also discussed.

21. Management Report 1 April – 31 May 2012:

Mr Teal indicated that Ric Cullinane (Walking Access Commission) was intending to attend the meeting but will now attend the next meeting in Wellington in August. He did however update progress on some issues :

- Upper Rangitikei – no further progress with NZ Defence
- Wardells Bridge- report from WAC claiming partial success in developing relationships and ensuring unencumbered access occurs, but John Pansters reports that the physical outcome of stile construction etc had not eventuated.
- Potaka Road – while F&G had indicated that it would not oppose stopping of the road, WAC may have other interested parties that may oppose based on strategic position of the sites.

Mr Pansters also noted that the gate was still locked at the Hautapu site, which had been reported to WAC some time ago as an “access issue”.

Mr Teal informed Council that DOC had shown some interest in maimai structures on Pukepuke Lagoon that required building consents as DOC had constructed them. Very minor additions to the structures to allow camouflage net placement had rendered them non-complying to the engineers plans.

These structures would not normally require a building consent but as DOC has built them their operational policy is to have all structures with building consent. Mr Teal highlighted this as an issue that Fish & Game should be proactive on for the Wairarapa sites to ensure there was an element of F&G (hunter driven) control and education initiatives. It was agreed that the Lake Wairarapa subcommittee would look into these issues and define a timeframe for this to progress.

Acting Chairman Cotsilinis indicated that the Wellington Fly-fishing Club had been pledged funds from a benefactor to assist with Happy Valley Fish Out Days and that Manic Tackle had recently provided 12 rods and reels to upgrade existing stock.

Councillor Morris noted the relatively high number of compliance incidents and briefly discussed the merits of prosecutions and reparation.

Acting Chairman Cotsilinis noted the recent passing of Dennis Hanson – a long time duck hunter (known to many) who passed away while hunting on opening weekend.

It was then moved that

The management report for 1 April – 31 May 2012 be received.

Tim Allen/Andrew Morris

Carried

22. Licence Sales Report as at 31 May 2012

It was noted that the fish licence sales were tracking down on budget but game licence sales were similar to last year's at the same time. After brief discussion it was moved that

The Fish Licence Sales report as at 31 May 2012 be received.

Richard Moore/Andrew Morris

Carried

It was then moved

The Game Licence Sales report as at 31 May 2012 be received.

Richard Moore/Andrew Morris

Carried

23. Expenditure Report/Financial Transactions

There was brief discussion on the details of expenditure and sales figures provided.

After brief discussion it was moved

the Expenditure Report for 30 April 2012 and Financial Transactions for March and April 2012 be approved

Tim Allen/Andrew Morris

Carried

Mr Teal advised that under project 1232 Habitat Management Opportunities there could be up to \$480 spent on a project near Shannon to clear away fallen willows from a site.

Mr Teal advised Council that a replacement vehicle was due for the Mitsubishi Triton and that a purchase was likely in the near future. Options for sponsorship were discussed.

24. Correspondence/Media

Nic Cudby gave an overview of the consultation that had taken place since his letter and that a committee meeting to consider the Baring Head Management Plan was meeting on the 14 June 2012 – which he was attending and noted that Acting Chairman Cotsilinis was also appearing on behalf of Wellington Fly fishers Club. Councillor Allen considered that a general submission/comments that advocated for all hunters (rabbit etc) should be made for this site.

The meeting adjourned at 6.00pm and Mr Pansters left the meeting. The meeting was reconvened at 6.45pm.

A letter from Mr A Long requesting clarification on regulations relating to the use of floss line for “dapping fishing” was considered. It was agreed that the use of the line did not breach regulations but the length of the rod may be an issue in Taupo Fishing District and he would need to contact DOC Turangi to get confirmation on legality.

A letter from Mr D West requesting Fish & Game to promote grey teal for change in status to gamebird as a priority. Mr Teal explained some background that showed the population could sustain at least locally based limited season. He also noted that others including Councillor Mark Grace had requested for this issue to be considered with more urgency.. It was agreed that Wellington Fish & Game Council would write to other regional Fish & Game Councils seeking support and consensus for promoting the change of status of grey teal to gamebird via NZ F&GC in the first instance.

A letter was received by Mr R Ellison expressing the view that there were several liberal hunting conditions that were potentially having a detrimental effect on hunting ethics and mallard population numbers. It was agreed that these issues may be valid – particularly the liberalisation of hunting conditions and increased efficiency of techniques and equipment, and access to remote areas using 4WD vehicles and quad bikes. This would be discussed in detail at the Game Regulation Setting meeting later in the year.

25. General Business

Mr Teal gave an overview of Wairarapa Water Use Project (primarily focused on irrigation potential) where the consultants had reviewed the previous options identified and widened the scope to assess over 400 sites which had been narrowed down to 30 sites of 'high potential'. This differs from the original concept of having one or two large reservoirs and potentially having many smaller water containment sites. Mr Teal also confirmed that land use intensification and its potential effects was a key consideration for a science working party to consider.

Mr Teal confirmed that the wind-farm at Castlehill proposed by Genesis Energy had just been granted consent – although they have indicated that electricity demand will dictate when construction will occur.

Mr Teal referred to a letter from Mr John Petrie regarding a request for exemption for two Stephen Grant 12 gauge firearms of high value but not proofed for using steel. Mr Teal noted that Hawke's Bay F&GC region was the only region that considered exemptions on a limited basis (a couple per year). It was agreed that exemptions wouldn't be considered as there are alternative non-toxic shot available (bismuth, tungsten matrix) and that there would be a potential influx of possible exemption requests if made available.

Mr Teal had been made aware that members of the Rangitikei Fish & Game Club that use Kilmore lodge had the understanding that firewood would be provided as part of their fee. For several years there have been difficulties in maintaining a stock of firewood, and it was considered users provide their own firewood. It was agreed that firewood would not be supplied by Fish & Game and this be clearly stated to all those using the lodge and also provide an updated explanation of what the costs are in maintaining the lodge.

Councillor Jim Cook requested that Council consider acquiring (either by purchase or request) 300-400 pheasants to be released into western Manawatu forests. Banding recoveries of the birds released nearly two years ago confirm survival, and are adding value to the upland game hunters in the area. Mr Cook was requested to present an options paper for a subsequent meeting.

Mr Hancock left the meeting at 7.25pm

26. Fish & Game Licence Management System Review

Item 10 differed from previously in meeting.

The Council agreed *to move into Public Excluded session* (at 7.25pm)

Richard Moore/Andrew Morris

Carried

That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting namely the agenda item:

Fish & Game Licence Management System Review

The withholding of information is necessary to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by councillors or officers and to maintain legal professional privilege and potentially commercially sensitive information.

This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a)(II) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982 which would be prejudiced by the holding of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public

Wellington F&GC move out of committee (at 7.55pm) and that the public be invited to return to the meeting.

Richard Moore/Tim Allen

Carried

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 7.55pm.

Next Meeting to be held: to be confirmed, Upper Hutt Cosmopolitan Club, Upper Hutt Wellington , Wednesday 22 August 2012, at 3.00pm

Chairman _____ Date _____