

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 10 JUNE 2014 AT 3.00PM AT MASTERTON COSMOPOLITAN CLUB, 398 QUEEN STREET. MASTERTON

1. **Present:**

Chairman Martin Taylor, Councillors Simon Muckley, Andy Tannock, Andrew Morris, Jim Cook, Strato Cotsilinis, Brad Johnson, Richard Moore, Chris O'Meara

2. **In Attendance:**

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Steve Pilkington,

Licenceholders: Ross Turner, Mark Flaws, Bob Hooker, Steve Hogg, David Rivell

3. **Apologies:**

Councillors Eric Neumann, , Mark Grace , Andy Tannock (for lateness)

Staff: Sue Wray, Corina Jordan

Licenceholders: John Pansters

It was then moved that:

the apologies be accepted.

Jim Cook/Andrew Morris

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 February 2014:**

After a brief discussion it was noted for item 20 that Councillor Cook had moved correspondence be received, and it was moved (subject to that amendment):

the Minutes of the last meeting of the previous Wellington Fish & Game Council of 8 April 2014 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Andrew Morris/Jim Cook

Carried

6. **Matters Arising**

Mr Teal confirmed that he had requested information and was awaiting response from Greater Wellington Regional Council on behalf of Fish & Game Council regarding the costs associated with supporting and administrating the Roopu Tiaki Board established by Greater Wellington Regional Council and Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust to manage the Pencarrow area lakes. This included requests for information on staff time for membership of the group, staff time for servicing the group, frequency of all meetings (regular, and consultation), meeting costs and gratuities, and any other budget item.

Discussion ensued on a letter from Roger Smailes dated 25 May 2014 regarding the tensions and perceived erosion of goodwill amongst the rural community from Fish & Game's 'dirty dairying strategy'. Mr Smailes stated it was his intent to initiate discussion on objectively reviewing the existing strategy strategies for maintaining water quality, and also discuss a public awareness strategy for engaging with rural communities.

Councillor Morris confirmed NZ Fish & Game Council had discussed these issues following critical comments received in correspondence about some actions being viewed as overly confrontational. Councillor Cotsilinis expressed his view that despite his initial concern that the approach undertaken by the CE of NZ Fish & Game Council was being perceived as being confrontational, he now considered that Fish & Game were essentially the sole agency actively advocating the public interest in protecting freshwater values. He considered that the CE NZF&GC would inevitably receive criticism when expressing a contrary view to industry interests relating to water quality messaging. He related that at the Federation of Freshwater Anglers AGM it was considered that many comments made by the CE NZF&GC were in response to regional Federated Farmers press releases. Views expressed at that meeting noted that the rural perception of Fish & Game 'targeting solely farmers' could be avoided with an improved relationship with the NZ executive structure at Federated Farmers. He concurred that the messaging needed to be expressed so it did not focus solely on farmers causing effects.

He supported Fish & Game public awareness efforts to promote good practices as evidenced by examples of good farm management such as the example of Waikuku Stream, a tributary of the Ashley River in Canterbury (press release *Scoop* 29/5/14 - page 181 of agenda).

It was also considered that Fish & Game doesn't need to back off the water quality issues in election year as it is an important and fundamental issue.

Andy Tannock arrived at the meeting at 3.10pm

Councillor Simon Muckley noted that Wellington Fish & Game Council should respond to the correspondence letters received (Mr Smailes 25/5/14 and Mr McNeur 24/5/14) expressing these views. It was also agreed that any issues referenced in the letters relating to actions undertaken by the CE NZFGC be left to the NZ F&GC's deliberation, but Mr Smailes letter would be forwarded to NZFGC for their consideration.

It was then moved that

The Chairman reply to the letters received from Mr Smailes and Mr McNeur summarising the considerations and views discussed at this meeting

Strato Cotsilinis/Richard Moore

Carried
Unanimous

7. **NZ Council Business**

Councillor Morris gave a report of the NZ Council meeting held on 24 May 2014. He noted that the meeting was attended by the Director General of the Department of Conservation who expressed their desire to have better relationships with stakeholders and partners. He said that the DG DOC had also expressed the principles of sharing costs with partnerships to avoid further budget cuts.

Councillor Morris noted that the Environmental Manager role concept that was developed by Wellington Fish & Game Council had been endorsed by the F&G Managers and subsequently NZ Council at the meeting.

Councillor Morris further noted that North Canterbury Fish & Game Council had sought full funding for the *Fish in Schools* programme that had only been recommended for partial funding by F&G Managers but no funding for the project received endorsement by NZ F&GC.

Councillor Morris noted that following discussion the licence fee recommendation for a \$2 increase in Adult Wholeseason Fishing Licence and a nil increase in Adult Game Bird Hunting Licence was endorsed for further regional F&G consultation.

Councillor Morris also noted that Lindsay Lyons is the new NZF&GC Chairman and chaired his first meeting.

It was then moved

That the report presented by Councillor Morris relating to the NZ Fish & Game Council meeting on 24 May 2014 be received

Chris O'Meara/Brad Johnson

Carried

David Rivell arrived at the meeting from 3:15pm

8. **Annual Plan Update**

Mr Teal noted that Wellington Fish & Game Council had intended to leverage Fish in Schools programme undertaken by North Canterbury F&GC and this may require some adjustment to activities in Wellington region.

Mr Teal also confirmed that the Wellington F&G project for Environment Manager role had been approved.

9. **Licence Fee Recommendation**

Discussion focussed on the merits of the NZ Council recommendation for a \$2 increase to the Adult Whole Season Fish Licence fee from \$121 to \$123 (which equates to a \$1.6% increase), and the Adult Wholeseason Game Licence to remain at \$91 (inclusive of \$2 Game Bird Habitat Trust).

The relative merits of retaining the game bird hunting licence at an unchanged fee was discussed in detail with the following points being an example of discussion::

1. supporting moderate adjustment/increase;
 - Principle of any increase keeping pace with inflation ;
 - Additional funding for research into mallard population dynamics is likely to be required
2. Supporting status quo of game licence fee;
 - Current perception of lowered value for licence by hunters in the upper North Island due to ebb in population number of mallard;
 - Would the marginal benefits in research outputs into mallard population dynamics be matched for any corresponding licence fee increase?

After discussion the Wellington F&G Council moved to accept the recommendation as concluded in the NZ Council paper, namely;

The 2014/15 licence fee recommendation for a 2014/15 adult whole season sports fish licence be \$123 and the adult whole season game licence be \$91 (inclusive of a \$2 fee for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp) inclusive of GST

Chris O'Meara/Richard Moore

Carried

10. **Draft Anglers Notice 2014/15**

Councillor Tannock sought clarification on "Gulpö soft fishing baits" whether scented or unscented as they are an effective lure. Mr Teal and Mr Pilkington noted that from the regulation guide they are essentially classed as "bait" in the Anglers Notice First Schedule unless otherwise stated in the Second Schedule of the notice that refers to regional conditions. Specifically, this was worded for bait definition in the First Schedule as "Any scented lure, soft bait and other synthetic imitations with chemical attractant properties, except where stated otherwise in the second schedule of this notice." Councillor Tannock noted that Southland allows for their use essentially as a lure under their Second Schedule

õScented artificial lures may be used in all waters other than fly fishing only waters, when actively fished so as to imitate a bait fishö. This item was deferred for consideration at the 2015/16 Angler Notice deliberations.

The issue of a proposed limit on the maximum number of trout an anglers can keep per day was discussed. It was noted that all other regions had some type of total limit, with the merits of establishing a limit was discussed: ethical basis, managing opportunity and expectation of anglers, and potential for overharvest with no limit on some rivers. Councillor Tannock considered that if angler opportunity is being potentially affected then the status quo option may be preferred.

It was then moved that

A maximum limit of up to four fish for taking trout on any one river per day be included as a condition in the Anglers Notice 2014/15

Strato Cotsilinis/Simon Muckley

Carried

Brad Johnson abstained

The merits of establishing a maximum size limit of 450 mm for the Waikanae River were discussed ó including the restrictions on bait fishing if catch and release practice is anticipated.

It was then moved that

the maximum size limit of 450mm for taking trout be implemented for the Waikanae River be included as a condition in the Anglers Notice 2014/15

Strato Cotsilinis/Brad Johnson

Carried

After brief discussion it was moved that

the fishing methods for the Waikanae River be restricted to fly and spin fishing only for Waikanae River be included as a condition in the Anglers Notice 2014/15

Richard Moore/Andrew Morris

Carried

Chairman Taylor introduced the concept of increasing angler opportunity in the Hutt River by allowing for bait fishing as a method for child licenceholders only. It was noted that bait fishing was not currently allowed on the Hutt River due to the catch and release potential for large trout above 450mm. Councillor Tannock noted that with the cyclic nature of fish population, there is an opportunity to allow a more relaxed harvest, while promoting youth fishing opportunity.

It was then moved that

Child Licenceholders (or under 12 as at 1 October 2014) be permitted to use bait fishing methods in the Hutt River as a condition in the Anglers Notice 2014/15 – Fly and Spin restrictions still apply to all other licenceholder categories

Martin Taylor/Chris O'Meara

Carried

It was agreed that a review of the potential impact would be undertaken in 2015 with a view to further expanding this concept ó with rangers to assess children fishing frequency changes, and point of sale anecdotal accounts. It was also agreed to publicise this condition to clubs and in Wellington Fish & Gameø's communications and publications.

After brief discussion it was moved that

All the other conditions that were in place from the 2013/14 Anglers Notice be retained for the 2014/15 Anglers Notice (with the addition of the aforementioned proposed changes)

Strato Cotsilinis/Jim Cook

Carried

11. Rangitikei River Trout Fishery Management Report

Mr Pilkington gave an overview of the report and after briefly clarifying some points, it was moved:

That Wellington Fish & Game Council receive the report "Rangitikei River Catchment Trout Monitoring" June 2014

Jim Cook/Andrew Morris

Carried

12. Hutt and Waikanae Report

Mr Pilkington gave an overview of the report. Staff were thanked for their efforts after which it was moved:

That Wellington Fish & Game Council receive the report "Report number 14, Hutt and Waikanae Rivers Sports Fish Monitoring Results 1999-2014" dated May 2014"

Richard Moore/Chris O'Meara

Carried

13. Trout Reservoir Options Update

Mr Teal noted that Centennial (Hokowhitu) Lagoon had experienced some damage following the earthquakes in January which has result in significant loss of surface water. This is a significant issue for Palmerston North City Council, but also potentially for planned Fish Out Days.

Mr Teal also informed Council that water temperatures were being monitored at Avalon

14. Junior Novice Participation Update

Mr Teal noted that preparation for introduction of the Fish in Schools programme would continue with the purchase of capital item equipment anticipated before end of August.

15. Lake Wairarapa Update

Mr Teal noted that resource consents for the weir had been granted and that options for replacement/upgrade were being considered. Monitoring by Greater Wellington Regional Council was anticipated to determine the rate of water level change and extent of this. Councillor Tannock considered that if consent conditions allowed then attempts to increase water levels over spring season would be desirable. Mr Teal indicated that this would be undertaken if the constraints of the consent and favourable weather conditions prevailed.

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of Bartons Lagoon fish removal project but expressed frustration at the timing of the operations by GWRC's consultant.

Mr Teal indicated that local iwi were interested in options to manage perch numbers either on a commercial or non-commercial basis. An overview of the current legislative and regulatory structure would be reviewed.

Mr Teal gave an overview of the collaboration between agencies regarding illegal fishing on Lake Wairarapa and surrounds which were the principal responsibilities of Department of Conservation (whitebait), and Ministry of Primary Industries (for eel and other species). Fish & Game would provide compliance input and co-operation but without extending our current responsibilities or commitments.

Councillor O'Meara noted that some landholders adjoining the Ruamahanga Cut were prepared to put funding into opening some of the linkages up.

It was agreed that up to \$200 gift be provided as a token of appreciation to the landholder from hunters (from JK Donald access fund) to acknowledge continued co-operation in access arrangements to JK Donald Wetland, especially given the incidents of non-hunters accessing the site without permission prior to season start.

16. Pencarrow Lakes Access Submission Update

It was confirmed by Chairman Taylor and Councillor Muckley that the hearing for the Co-Management Plan is planned for 27 June 2014. It was also confirmed that a legal opinion had been sought and provided (total cost approximately \$5,000), with an appropriate letter drafted to political contacts. The response from the Minister of Treaty Settlements did not provide any indication of proactive intervention or outcome but it did indicate that the Ministry may engage in discussions with Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust. Chairman Taylor indicated that media releases occur from Fish & Game if no progress is imminent and the expected progression of the draft Co-Management Plan continues unchanged.

Chairman Taylor noted that the NIWA report indicates a risk factor by assumption ó and he did not consider that enough evidence to classify the hunting activity as a significant environmental impact. The scientific reserves status that was created as a result of the treaty settlement was also made in light of the activities that were already occurring there. Councillor Morris reinforced the value of these cases as a potential precedent for other sites. Chairman Taylor indicated potential legal address options should the process not eventuate in a preferred outcome.

17. **Angler Access Issue – Bluff Road, Woodville**

Steve Pilkington gave an overview of the issues where Land Information NZ had granted an interim grazing lease at a site (Crown Land ó accreted) used by anglers to access the Manawatu River. There had been a recent history of the adjacent landholder grazing the site with poor management practices.

After clarification and discussion it was moved

To apply to the Commissioner of Lands (LINZ) for a review and rehearing of the grazing licence application and draft grazing lease.

Jim Cook/Strato Cotsilinis

Carried

18. **Mallard Research Projects Update**

Mr Teal gave a brief explanation of current progress including issues with transmitter settings which had been resolved, and the arrival of the PhD student, including supervisor. It was anticipated that around 60 birds would be tracked in the Waikato region this year. The progress of the other projects was also discussed .

19. **Licence Management System Update**

Mr Teal gave an overview of the issues encountered with on-line licence purchase over the Anzac weekend ó the exact issue had been resolved and could be considered a õtechnical glitchö which caused significance nuisance. After discussion with EyeDe Ltd they are compensating Fish & Game with additional improvements which would have been otherwise a separate cost transaction.

Mr Teal also gave an update that NZ F&GC had requested the Minister of Conservation to consider the introduction of new licence categories for the 2014 season. It was expected that Department of Conservation staff would provide their legal and logistic assessment to the Minister, with the consideration that some of the categories would be introduced this year.

20. **Management Report 1 April – 31 May 2014**

Mr Teal indicated that temporary maimais were used for junior hunting opportunity at Yules lagoon but it was anticipated to have more permanent structures by next season.

Mr Teal confirmed that there had not been any issues brought to attention regarding the hunting at Baring Head being actively managed by Fish & Game.

After discussion it was moved that

The management report for 1 April – 30 May 2014 be received.

Chris O'Meara/Richard Moore

Carried

21. Fishing Licence Report and Game Licence Report

After brief discussion it was moved that

The Fish Licence Sales and Game Licence Sales reports as at 28 May 2014 be received.

Andrew Morris/Strato Cotsilinis

Carried

22. Expenditure Report

After discussion it was moved that

the Expenditure Report for 30 April 2014 and Financial Transactions for March and April 2014 be approved

Strato Cotsilinis/ Jim Cook

Carried

23. Correspondence

Brief discussion ensued on correspondence and media after which it was then moved that

Correspondence and Media reports for April – May be received

Andrew Morris/Jim Cook

Carried

24. General Business

Mr Spry had provided a letter requesting a review of balloting policy referring to perceived issues at Pukepuke Lagoon relating to maintenance work and hunter commitment. It was agreed that a review of the ballot policy for all blocks would be considered by the end of the year.

Mr Teal sought clarification on whether Council had a preference for several small projects or larger projects for applications relating to the reparation reserve. Council indicated that there was no particular preference for large projects and that any small projects would be considered on a case by case basis

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 5.20pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Coachman Hotel, Palmerston North, Tuesday 19 August 2014 at 3.00pm.

Chairman_____

Date_____