

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 190th MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW
ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 5th AUGUST 2021 AT 12.00PM**

Present

Crs David Woolner, Barry Roderick, Laurance Tamati, Alan Baird, Debbie Oakley, Lindsay Lyons, Ken Coombes, Geoff Thomas, Adam Rayner, and Ngahi Bidois.

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Garrick, John Meikle, Eben Herbert, and Kate Thompson (Eastern Fish & Game); Carmel Veitch (New Zealand Fish & Game).

1.0 WELCOME AND KARAKIA

- 1.1 Cr David Woolner (Chairman) opened the meeting at 12.10pm, welcomed all present, and invited Cr Ngahi Bidois to start the meeting with a karakia.
- 1.2 Cr David Woolner informed the meeting that item 11 regarding the 2021 Fish and Game Elections would be brought forward as Cr Ngahi Bidois needed to depart the meeting at 2pm.

2.0 APOLOGIES

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Cr Murray Ferris, Cr Ngahi Bidois for his early departure from the meeting, and Dave Conley (Department of Conservation).
- 2.2 *Agreed (Alan Baird/Laurance Tamati) that the apologies for the 190th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [21/08/2.2]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (10TH JUNE 2021)

- 3.1 *Agreed (Ngahi Bidois/Ken Coombes) that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2021 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [21/08/3.1]*

4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY

- 4.1 No items were identified for inclusion in Council policy.

5.0 MATTERS ARISING

- 5.1 Cr Laurance Tamati informed Council of concerns raised by Ken Raureti regarding opening of Lake Tarawera to year-round fishing (refer minuted item 10.1 and 10.2). Cr Lindsay Lyons commented that he understood Ken's concern was that the lake should be allowed to rest over winter. Council was not intending to open Tarawera, Rotoiti or Okataina to year round boat fishing, but needed to address an issue arising from shifting the opening of these lakes to fishing from 1 October to the first Saturday in October. Currently shoreline fishing can be undertaken year round (1 October to 30 September) on these lakes within the designated winter shoreline areas, but shifting the opening to the first Saturday in October would mean shoreline fishing would end on 30 September and be closed for a period of 1-6 days in those years when 1 October didn't coincide with being a Saturday. This didn't make sense.

6.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

- 6.1 Adam Rayner – Council photo
– social media presence
Alan Baird – media article on native birds dying of lead poisoning

7.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

7.1 Councillors were asked to inform the chair of any conflicts of interest. Potential conflicts were identified by Cr Adam Rayner and subsequently by Cr Lindsay Lyons around discussions relating to Agenda Item 12 and ballot holder access to the Kaituna WMR. Both Councillors had held ballots in the reserve this game season.

8.0 2021 FISH AND GAME ELECTIONS

8.1 Cr David Woolner asked for discussion on proposed Councillor numbers for the 2021 Fish and Game election. Would this council continue with 12 seats or opt for a lower number in anticipation of the lower numbers recommended within the ministerial review of Fish and Game. The following points items were raised and/or discussed:

- There is a lot of conjecture out there that Fish & Game is opposed to the review. A reduction in line with recommendations from the review would signal that Fish & Game is committed to the intent of this particular recommendation at the very least;
- All Councillors choose to be here voluntarily, this shows commitment to the organisation and interest which should be provided for by retaining a Council of 12 members at this point in time;
- Representation across the sub-regions is required and may not occur with fewer members;
- How will there be sufficient diversity within the Council with fewer members?
- Appointed versus co-opted members;
- Iwi representation - with so many iwi and hapu within the Eastern Region it's not possible to have someone on Council who is capable of or would have support from iwi to represent their diversity of views or positions and positions on matters, rather Council needs a member who can bring te ao maori perspectives to the table;
- A suggestion that Council opt for eight elected members and appoint two additional members was rejected as not being possible under current legislation.

8.2 Ultimately Council supported maintaining the status quo for the upcoming election with the intention that it review membership at a later point in time.

9.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

9.1 Some Councillors had noticed the boardwalks were slippery in some areas and Cr Adam Rayner offered his services to assist staff with cleaning these.

9.2 Cr Lindsay Lyons queried the reimbursement of travel costs for those Councillors who lived in areas outside of the region and understood that reimbursement was only to be paid for travel within the Region's boundaries. Kate Thompson advised that she would look into the rules around reimbursement of costs, but wanted to make the point that the particular reimbursement being queried was for a meeting that was called at short notice that was outside of Council's scheduled bi-monthly meetings, and that the Councillor concerned had not claimed for travel costs associated with any of those scheduled meetings which he was entitled to during his time on Council. Cr Barry Roderick re-iterated his concern that the meeting in question with the New Zealand Council chair was too short notice for some Councillors to attend. Andy Garrick commented that the meeting was purely opportunistic and should not have been portrayed as a consultation meeting with the Eastern Fish and Game Council.

9.2 *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Laurance Tamati) that Council receives the Management Report and Health and Safety reports. [21/08/9.2]*

9.3 Kate Thompson pointed out a typo in the finance report where the total for payments in May and June 2021 was incorrectly recorded as being \$239,744.47 on page 45 of the agenda and that the correct figure was \$264,186.17.

9.4 *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Laurance Tamati) that Council receives the Finance Report and approves payments for May and June 2021 totalling \$264,186.17. [21/08/9.4]*

10.0 2021-2022 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

10.1 Cr David Woolner confirmed that no feedback had been generated from the distribution of the draft 2021-2022 Operational Work Plan to clubs and stakeholders.

10.2 Cr Barry Roderick was pleased that the Eastern Council's bid to employ a hatchery trainee was successful but expressed concern over budgets of other regions, and in particular the disparities in the salaries of some managers. He was also concerned that CPI adjustments were coming out of licence revenue rather than the reserves of those regions with sufficient funds to finance these. Cr Debbie Oakley suggested that this was not the forum to discuss staff salaries as these would be considered in the wider review process.

10.3 *Agreed (Debbie Oakley/Ngahi Bidois) that Council approves the Operational Work Plan and budget for the 2021-2022 year. [21/08/10.3]*

10.4 *Agreed (Debbie Oakley/Ngahi Bidois) that Council delegates authority to the Manager to approve expenditure during the year as set out in the Council approved Operational Wok Plan and budget. [21/08/10.4]*

11.0 EASTERN FISH AND GAME COUNCIL FORESTRY ASSET

11.1 Andy Garrick provided a brief overview to the agenda item proposing the removal of the Forestry Asset from the Council's financial statements. It had been costing the Council valuation fees each year which other than meeting auditors' requirements was a meaningless expense given we have no intention of harvesting those trees. The Douglas fir trees were planted to stabilise the hillside above the hatchery and rearing ponds. Given the marginal return likely to be realised from harvesting the trees and the cost of reinstating an effective erosion proof cover over the area, staff believe it should not be viewed as a saleable asset. As the trees were planted pre 1990 the stand is ineligible for carbon credits under the Emissions Trading Scheme, and likewise the stand does not qualify for any form of nitrogen trade off or buy back scheme for retirement of pastureland as has been, or was available within the Taupo catchment.

11.2 Carmel Veitch confirmed it had to have a benefit to the organisation to be classed as an asset. She agreed that the original intention was to stabilise the hillside and unfortunately in having it added to the financial accounts some years ago, changes to accounting standards had meant that it required an annual valuation.

11.2 *Agreed (Ken Coombes/Lindsay Lyons) that Council agrees to the Forestry Asset as recorded in Note 3 in the Performance report for the year ended 31 August 2020 no longer being viewed as a future source of income realised from the logging and sale of its timber, but as an Erosion Control and Land Stabilising Asset not intended for sale. [21/08/11.2]*

11.3 *Agreed (Ken Coombes/Lindsay Lyons) that Council agrees to write off the Forestry Asset currently valued at \$91,600 and create a new Asset within Property, Plant and Equipment at a value, as at 31 August 2021, to be determined by an independent valuer. [21/08/11.3]*

12.0 BALLOT HOLDER ACCESS TO THE LOWER KAITUNA WMR

- 12.1 Cr David Woolner noted that Cr Lindsay Lyons had prepared a paper on hunting access to the Kaituna Reserve and emailed it to all Councillors to be considered in conjunction with the prepared agenda item. David commented that the discussion to follow may be relevant to other managed wetlands also.
- 12.2 Cr Debbie Oakley pointed out that Council needed to confirm whether it was appropriate for Cr Lindsay Lyons and Adam Rayner to be involved in the discussion having earlier recorded their conflict of interest with this item. All those present agreed that Crs Lyons and Rayner should be able to provide information and participate in the conversation. Andy Garrick advised that staff looked forward to hearing Councillors' views and suggestions and would take these into account when reviewing and if appropriate modifying our current approach. He noted that ultimately it was an operational matter for management to resolve rather than governors.
- 12.3 There was mixed opinion about closure of vehicle access at the conclusion of the exclusive ballot holder period and the following suggestions were made:
- Those with disabilities or incapable of walking significant distances could only hunt in the reserve when the gates were open to vehicle access if they didn't have a quad;
 - Access should not be by vehicle the night before opening as people shouldn't be disturbing ducks;
 - Once the gates were closed, access to maimai involving a significant walk was a disincentive to go and this resulted in a shortened season for those affected;
 - Given the reserve is so close to built up areas, its unlikely to be long before people start using it for 4WD adventures;
 - There is a maimai close to the gate which was vacant for most of the season, and this and others a relatively short distance away are options for those unable to walk very far;
 - We need to publicise what opportunities exist to those less able, and prior to the ballots we need to advise hunters the accessibility and degree of effort required to reach stands if vehicle access is unavailable. Stands could be categorised along the lines of being easy, moderately challenging, or requiring greater effort to get to;
 - Risks and consequences of leaving gates open, e.g. damage to tracks, health and safety issues.
- 12.4 Cr Ken Coombes asked for John Meikle's comment. John provided some background to Council in relation to damage done to tracks in the past not only by hooners, but unintentionally by otherwise caring hunters. John noted the significant funding and effort put in by the Regional Council over the past couple of years to upgrade the tracks, and detailed the system we currently have in place in terms of gates, quad access, and other users. The Department of Conservation had not contributed to maintenance costs over the past 7-8 years and our total budget less habitat contribution fee from ballot holders for management of this and all other reserves in the region was \$12,000. A substantial amount was spent on keeping water in the wetlands, and additional costs were incurred with mowing access tracks via staff time and equipment costs. The annual habitat contribution fee by ballot holders of around \$5,000 contributed to spraying and maintenance of access tracks in all balloted reserves, but when tracks were seriously damaged as they easily can be when water levels are higher than they were this year, this sum of money doesn't go far. If our budget is constantly having to be

directed to maintenance and repair of tracks it leaves nothing for enhancement or development of additional access.

- 12.5 Cr Barry Roderick felt that the outer access ring road was solid and suggested that vehicles be kept out of internal access ways, and maybe Fish & Game could provide keys to those with mobility issues. Cr Alan Baird suggested specific easily accessible stands could be made available to those who inform Fish & Game they have limitations in terms of their ability to walk greater distances. Cr Lindsay Lyons suggested that ballot holders could contribute to maintaining access tracks through working bees.
- 12.6 Cr Ngahi Bidois left the meeting at 1.30pm.
- 12.7 Cr Ken Coombes did not support vehicles in wetlands, quad access was available, and he agreed that closer and more easily accessible stands could be identified.
- 12.8 Eben Herbert indicated his preference would be for vehicles to be excluded from wetlands, but felt that the Kaituna Reserve ring road may be something that could be made greater use of if it was possible to prevent people from deviating off it.
- 12.9 Andy Garrick thanked Council for their input and suggestions and advised that staff would devise an approach aimed at maximising access opportunities while minimising damage and other potential impacts.

13.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

13.1 Conservation Boards

No report.

13.2 Department of Conservation

No report.

13.3 Te Arawa Lakes Trust

No report.

13.4 The New Zealand Fish and Game Council

Cr Debbie Oakley commented briefly on items covered at the most recent meeting of the New Zealand Council including;

- Workshop on ministerial review
- October council elections
- Licence fee increase – two regions opposed
- Pheasant preserves
- Appointment of Di Taylor to Acting CEO
- Thanks to Paul Shortis

14.0 PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION

14.1 Agreed (Debbie Oakley/Laurance Tamati) that pursuant to Section 48 (1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, the public be excluded at 1.51 pm from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

- **Manager's annual performance review,**
- **Council's self-appraisal review. [21/08/14.1]**

14.2 Agreed (Debbie Oakley/Laurance Tamati) that the public be re-admitted to the meeting at 2.40pm. [21/08/14.2]

15.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

15.1 Cr Adam Rayner requested a group photo of Councillors be arranged.

15.2 Adam also noted that we really need to review our use of social media and commented on opportunities being missed. Andy Garrick agreed. He advised that we update our Facebook page relatively regularly and also have a Twitter following, but need to be

using other media platforms such as Instagram. One of our issues was not currently having the resources to do a good job of this. Andy said he understood that DOC had a dedicated team of something like eight staff dedicated to social media communications, and we just didn't have the capability to devote a significant amount of even one person's time to this. Cr David Woolner suggested Andy in conjunction with other staff give further thought to how we might be able to do more in this area.

- 15.3 Cr Alan Baird expressed concern over a recent article he had read about native birds dying from lead poisoning and associated comments about what is or isn't humane. His concern was that similar sentiments could be brought to bear on hunting and fishing, and what we could do to prevent this.

16.0 MEETING CLOSED

- 16.1 The meeting closed at 3.00pm with a karakia from Cr Laurance Tamati.



David Woolner
Chairman

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

2.0 APOLOGIES

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