**WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 11 JUNE 2019 AT 3.05PM AT WAIRARAPA RSA AND CLUB, 20 ESSEX STREET MASTERTON**

1. **Present:**

Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Colin Shore, Malcolm Francis, John Hancock, Chris O’Meara, Paul Shortis, Don Scott, Jim Cook, Richard McIntyre, Aaron Passey

1. **In Attendance:**

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Hamish Carnachan, Dr Matt Kavermann

Licenceholders: Chris Pearson, Simon Robertson, John Pansters, David Mill

1. **Apologies**:

Councillor Andy Tannock, Andrew McGregor.

Staff: Peter Wilson, Dr Adam Canning

It was then moved that:

 ***the apologies be accepted.***

**Chris O’Meara/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

1. **Confirmation of Agenda**

Chairman Cotsilinis confirmed that an urgent late business could be considered in the agenda item General Business. Councillor John Hancock noted there were some concerns forwarded to him on forestry operations in the Wairarapa. Councillor Chris O’Meara noted that he wished to discuss the use of buck shot near wetlands/open water.

1. **Conflicts of Interest**

A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of

Interest.

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of declaring conflicts of interest – being actual, potential, and perceived conflicts – and how these were to be managed. He noted that one of the outcomes from the CSI Fish & Game Council audit was to identify a conflict of interest at the earliest opportunity, and then how each conflict would be managed might be in a COI management plan, taking into consideration risk and degree of conflict. Councillor Shortis reiterated the outcomes from the CSI F&GC audit report that conflicts should be identify as early as possible, as it was intended that governors need to look after the collective of council, and if there were peripheral issues that they be dealt with formally by Council and not via social media or public forums.

Councillor Passey declared a potential conflict of interest in that he recently purchased a farm in the Tararua district that was yet to be consented in terms of the One Plan consenting process.

1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting of 26 March 2019**

After a brief discussion it was moved that:

***the Minutes of the Meeting of Wellington Fish & Game Council of 26 March 2019 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.***

**Jim Cook/Don Scott**

Carried

1. **Matters Arising from Previous Meeting 26 March 2019**

It was noted that NZ Fish & Game Council had not yet set up a committee to raise external funding.

There was a request to put on the website all the information papers and reports on hatchery management and stocking policies including those by the Cawthron Institute.

Councillor Shortis noted that there had been little internal traction in changing the draft submission by NZ Fish & Game Council on changes to the firearms legislation.

1. **NZ Council Meeting – 5 and 6 April 2019 and 7 and 8 June 2019**

Councillor Shortis provided an overview of the joint Council/Managers meeting on Friday 5 April 2019. The meeting did provide an opportunity to discuss the budget process and the tensions in the way Fish & Game set the budgets.

Councillor Shortis noted that the issue of trout farming will become increasingly to the forefront of public awareness – given potential proposals for trout farming in the Central North Island and scientific reasons for a continued precautionary approach being less defensible. However, at an environmental level it does not appear to be sustainable and, from an economic perspective, it is inefficient at converting food into fish biomass (for salmon and especially trout). Councillor Scott noted that trout farming can be a basis for angling pursuit in other countries and may well be a component of the R3 concept. Where wild-state fisheries are declining, trout farming (which is equivalent to a put-and-take fish out pond) can complement production. He gave an account of a trout farm in the UK which had 2-3 million production of small sized ‘supermarket’ fish – with the larger fish being used in fish out pond activities. He didn’t think this type of approach should be discounted out of hand but as a stand-alone operation was probably not economic.

Councillor Shortis that deadlines for agreements for Game Preserves (Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions) to be processed by the Department of Conservation were not met, in order to be processed by the start of the Game Season 2019 – with seven out the ten operating in 2019 but not doing so technically legally.

Councillor Shortis confirmed that NZ Council had discussed the progress of two of the regional audits – CSI Fish & Game Council and Hawke’s Bay Fish & Game Council.

Councillor Shortis reported on the growing tension between regional Fish & Game Council management and the NZ Council CE. An example of this was the three Managers on the Licence Working Party resigning from the committee due to their perceived lack of influence in the active part in decision making for a licence management system review.

The proposal progressed to set up sub-committees of NZC with two NZ councillors and two/three regional council representatives. It was agreed that setting up these committees might provide a bipartisan approach to proactively address potential future pressure on financial reservesNZ Council identified three work streams that required NZ Council co-ordination:

* Licence system/licence category critique
* Job Description and salary pay scales
* Five year running budget/allocation/ strategy

Discussion ensued on:

1. **Licence Management Sub-Committee** – Two NZC councillors and the three Managers from the previous Licence Working Party
2. **Budget/Strategic Plan Sub-Committee –** NZ Council has nominated two councillors with two/three regional council representatives to be nominate . This would look at the way funds are divided up and revenue streams and individual budget efficiencies. It was agreed that NZ Council doesn’t have the mandate to change budgets. Concern was expressed that considerable time resources could be committed to this project – and the outcome must be endorsed by the wider organisation and/or there is a risk that the review could be totally usurped.
3. **Remuneration/Job Description/Pay Scale Sub-Committee -**

NZ Council has nominated two councillors with two/three regional council representatives to be nominated.

Discussion ensued on a potential Wellington Fish & Game Council nominee for the Budget and Strategic Financial Review Sub-Committee. Chairman Cotsilinis initially declined accepting the nomination for the Budget/Strategic Plan Sub-Committee by Councillor O’Meara – and sought time to consider the commitments that might be involved in such an undertaking.

Discussion then ensued on potential Wellington Fish & Game Council nominees for the Licence Management Sub-Committee and the Remuneration Sub-Committee. Mr Teal was nominated by Council to be a member on each of those committees given his experience and understanding of the issues.

Councillor Shortis gave an overview of the progress made by the Salmon Committee – with spawning runs twenty years ago in the Rangitata River being in the order of 20,000+ dwindling to around 1,000 this year. There is speculation that something going on out at sea, and regulatory response of a one fish limit is being recommended. There is still consideration of hatchery reared release and it is noted that thousands of smolt are being caught in irrigation scheme screen intakes.

Councillor Shortis confirmed that there would be a meeting of chairpersons of regional Fish & Game councils with the NZ Fish & Game Council proposed for 22 November 2019 in Christchurch - with the NZ Council meeting scheduled for the following days: 23 and 24 November 2019.

Discussion acknowledged the challenges presented but confirmed the need for NZ Council to do their best to bridge the gap that was developing between regions and NZC. There was confirmation that regions required transparency in decision making and the organisational culture for decision making is bottom up (from regions) not top down (imposed). The Sub-Committees were suggested to be more inclusive and undertake a refocused governance role.

Discussion ensued on what NZC was doing to lift the profile of hunting and angling activities – as despite the increasing population, participation rates (and licence sales) are not matched. Councillor Francis considered the magazine (as a principal communication tool to the wider community) was not confidently promoting the pursuits. Councillor Hancock noted that regional activities such as Otaki Fish Out days should be widely promoted.

Councillor Shortis noted that the NZ Fish & Game Council CE was requested to refine a proposal for a business development manager. There was also indication from NZ Council that there is potential for external funding in addition to internally focused licence income. There was an acceptance that if the resource is degraded or continues to degrade then licence sales cannot be expected to increase significantly. Hamish Carnachan noted that in terms of public awareness there can be counterproductive messaging and there needs to be a strategy of how the organisation deals with advocacy and participation messaging.

Councillor Cook questioned how NZ Council was intending to progress the management and operations of game preserves after three years (of which year one is essentially completed). Councillor Shortis noted that NZ Council were actively considering options.

Councillor McIntyre inquired about the development of the communications strategy, with Councillor Shortis noting it was expected in August. Councillor Shortis also noted that there was discussion at the meeting about specific words that should be used in public communications – “harvest” not “kill”, “firearms” not “guns” or “weapons”.

It was then moved

***That the report of Councillor Shortis on the NZ Fish & Game Council meetings held on 5 and 6 April 2019 and 7 and 8 June 2019 be received***

**Colin Shore/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

1. **Public Participation**

Chairman Cotsilinis invited members of the public to bring up any issues. John Pansters indicated that Wairarapa Fish & Game Club had made a submission on the fishing regulations which would be covered under a later agenda item.

1. **Health & Safety Update**

Mr Teal provided an overview of the Health & Safety reporting.

It was then moved that

***The Health & Safety Report for April and May be received***

**Jim Cook/Aaron Passey**

Carried

1. **Licence Fee Recommendation**

Mr Teal provided an overview of the Licence Fee Recommendation discussion paper 2019/2020 Licence Fee Recommendations by Martin Taylor (NZF&GC CE) dated 12 April 2019. He confirmed that Wellington Fish & Game Council held a telephone conference on 28 May 2019 and emphasised the main points from the minutes.

It was then moved

***The minutes of the telephone conference of Wellington Fish & Game Council held on 28 May 2019 be confirmed to be a true and correct record.***

**Colin Shore/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

The topics referred to in the letter of 28 May 2019 to NZ Council were briefly discussed:

1. **Revenue – Licence Category Review and Price Sensitivity Analysis**

Wellington Council had the expectation that a formal comprehensive review would be undertaken at the end of three years including how the additional licence categories had affected revenue and participation from both a regional and nationwide perspective. Council is unaware of any up-to-date work undertaken to determine price sensitivities of each category – either for existing licence holders or potential new anglers. Wellington Council would encourage New Zealand F&GC to complete a more comprehensive and formal review of licence category relevance and pricing – and not be solely reliant on the existing work to make decisions on their continuance.

Wellington Council would also encourage work be undertaken on price sensitivity for the hunting licence as it approaches $100 for an adult whole season licence.

1. **Income Shortfall on Budgets**

Wellington Fish and Game Council supported the current budgeting process that provides for reasonable operational costs to be covered by budgeted income from licence revenue. Council considered it prudent for further work be undertaken to confirm the reasons for any material revenue shortfalls, including material regional variations (on a season to season basis and/or over a five year period), and changes to the licence categories which may have led to redistribution of licence sales between regions (e.g. Local Area licence).

1. **RMA Legal Fund**

Wellington Fish and Council considered that the two budget items have been lumped together in section 10 page 4 the memo of 12 April 2019 and should be separated for clarity and budgeting provision – i.e. the regional RMA Legal Pool Fund which is administered centrally and a separate budget item from Water Conservation Orders (with the Ngaruroro River application being currently active).

1. **Research Fund**

Wellington Fish and Game Council considered that the resources provisioned for research could be allocated before the November 2019 meeting.

1. **Additional Income Opportunities & Objectivity in Setting Licence Fees**

Wellington Fish and Game Council encourages NZ F&GC to have more haste and milestones to ascertain potential alternative income opportunities.

Wellington Fish and Game Council considered that there should be a robust objective protocol in determining the setting licence fees. For example the recommendation for an increase in the Adult Non-Resident Whole Season licence required more supporting information to support project budgeting.

Councillor Shortis noted that these had been referred to the appropriate sub-committees for consideration.

 It was then moved that

***The letter dated 28 May 2019 sent to NZ F&GC in response to the discussion paper was confirmed as accurately reflecting the views of Wellington Fish& Game Council from telephone conference on 28 May 2019***

**Colin Shore/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

John Pansters sought clarification as to the timeframes set for the three sub-committees, which Councillor Shortis confirmed:

1. Remuneration Sub-Committee – 6-9 months
2. Licence Management Sub-Committee
	* recommend a provider by the end of year
	* Price sensitivity confirmation – not defined timetable
3. Budget Review/Strategic Plan Sub-Committee – end of next year (2020)

Councillor Francis was still concerned that material savings were being promoted by NZ Council was not being reflected in their budgets. Councillor Shortis confirmed that this would be reflected in budgets once the strategic review is completed. Chairman Cotsilinis noted that the licence fee recommendation is determined by what is justifiable from budget requirements – and in the constraints of CPI increases and what the Minister approves as appropriate. Councillor Shortis confirmed that the budgets are determined as what we need to run the organisation and that the licence prices were not yet price sensitive for whole season categories.

1. **Policy Review Update**

Mr Teal provided an overview of the policy review requirements – defining policy in terms of governance focus and operational focus. He had further separated out the policies in terms of urgency of review and risk if not reviewed to enable a prioritisation of action. Mr Teal would provide a prioritised list at the next meeting.

It was moved

***To receive the update report on policy review***

**Don Scott/Chris O’Meara**

Carried

1. **Upland Game Properties**

Mr Teal provided an overview of the progress made by NZ F&G Council and Department of Conservation to list several of the Game Preserves under schedule 3 of the Wildlife Act rather than processing under the Game Notice. Three of the four properties in the Wellington region had indicated their preference to be consideration for operation under schedule 3 but the Department of Conservation had not been able to process them in time.

It was then moved

***That Council receive the update report on treatment of Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions as at June 2019***

**Malcolm Francis/Aaron Passey**

Carried

1. **Fish Regulations Review**

Mr Teal provided an overview of the topics that had been brought to the attention of staff by clubs and individual submissions. These included:

* Continued use of treble hooks: has become a debate within angling fraternity and whether to revert to single hook use only.
* Manawatu River: request to limit harvest due to less numbers being caught by anglers in the mainstem of the river

Dr Kavermann had prepared a paper that outlined the issues and some recommendations for consideration for the Anglers Notice 2019/2020,

Council considered a remit from Wairarapa Fish & Game Club with John Pansters providing further background and clarification. He related that there were anecdotal accounts of increased fishing pressure on backcountry fisheries (loosely defined as those waters which are listed as ‘closed’ for spawning periods in the Ruamahanga catchment) and the use by non-resident anglers of bait, and spinning gear with one/multi treble hooks in particular. He indicated that the Club had considered the current regulations which allowed for bait fishing in these aforementioned areas, and by using baited hooks effectively made it riskier for fish survival if ‘catch and release’ was an option. He further noted that they considered that the use of treble hooks also made release of fish harder if two hooks are in a trout’s mouth. They were seeking outcomes more consistent with ‘fly-only’ areas that exist in other regions. The club also wanted to signal to anglers that those waters referred to are a ‘sensitive’ fisheries that are subject to angler pressure, and that anglers should treat those fishing waters appropriately (given compliance difficulties).

Dr Kavermann referred to the background paper prepared for the Anglers Notice discussions and noted that from overseas research treble hooks aren’t a major problem for causing damage to fish as intuitively thought. He conceded that the overseas research was comparing veltic style spinning lures and not necessarily rapala style lures, and although data-based we are also managing expectations of anglers.

Councillor Francis outlined the background research he had done for Kapiti Fly Fishing Club and he reiterated that some research findings were conflicting (overseas treble hooks not significant but Taupo fisheries researcher considered it was defensible for a put and take fishery), but the handling of the fish was more likely to be a key issue for its survival should it be released.

Councillor O’Meara expressed the view that the limiting spinning technique in certain waters could be viewed as elitist, and this should be avoided. Chairman Cotsilinis reaffirmed that the Council did not want to promote an anti-spinning sentiment.

Councillor Scott noted that the Manawatu Freshwater Angling Club was divided in their conclusions on this subject; given that treble hook lures are readily available and easy to use, and concluded that handling fish is a key aspect to survival should the trout be released. He noted that other alternatives suggested at the Manawatu Freshwater Anglers Club included a compromise of barbless treble hooks. Councillor Scott reiterated that a key component in the R3 programme is a reasonable chance of fishing success, and it would not be good to indicate that treble hooks are bad in all situations. Councillor O’Meara expressed his view that he didn’t believe that a lot of fish are injured by anglers using treble hooks. Councillor Scott suggested that an alternate position was to retain the status quo as there was no clear evidence to change. Dr Kavermann reiterated that fish survival of any hooked fish depends on where the fish is hooked and how the fish is handled by the angler.

Further discussion ensued indicating a potential preference for using a fly lure rather than a spinning lure, with it generally agreed that handling of the fish was a very important aspect. Simon Robertson (speaking on behalf of the Wairarapa Fish & Game Club) reiterated that the submission was attempting to protect the fishery, not limit spin fisherman (as there are few of them anyway) but those anglers that do spin fish in the area are very proficient.

After further discussion it was moved

***That bait fishing not be allowed as a fishing method in sections of all rivers that are closed for spawning season (30 April to 1 October)***

**Malcolm Francis/John Hancock**

Carried

Against Chris O’Meara

Dr Kavermann was requested to confirm where this recommendation applies prior to final submission to ensure no unintended consequence.

After further discussion it was moved

***That the use of treble hooks not be allowed as a fishing method in sections of all rivers that are closed for spawning season (30 April to 1 October)***

**Richard McIntyre/Aaron Passey**

Carried

Against Chris O’Meara

After further discussion it was moved

***That spin fishing be allowed in as a fishing method in sections of all rivers that are closed for spawning season (30 April to 1 October) i.e.clarifying status quo.***

**Chris O’Meara/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

Discussion ensued on other river systems with Chairman Cotsilinis referring to figure 3 on page 50 that indicated a potential cyclical pattern for the eight reaches survey on the Hutt River.

Dr Kavermann noted that for the Manawatu River system the surveys focussed on four tributaries as a indicator of the wider system – and this showed a more static and stable population rather than cyclical. He further indicated that there were currently liberal limits of four per day – and when managing angler expectations this might indicate higher trout densities than that which actually exist throughout the catchment. He noted that the proposal to reduce to two fish per day per angler won’t have a material effect on the population level, as harvest would not appear to be additive mortality to the population.

Councillor Scott noted that Manawatu Freshwater Angler Club members and other experienced anglers had reported anecdotal accounts of a fall off in fishing success in the mainstem of the Manawatu River this year (including specific examples of excellent fishing waters now being relatively poor). He acknowledged that it may be difficult to attribute any single cause of the observations but discussion ensued on the possible causes:

* removed or degraded spawning habitat (physical works or bank erosion)
* elevated nitrogen levels from land use change/intensification causing algal build up on stones
* elevated nitrogen levels from land use change/intensification causing increases in algal biomass with respiration and photosynthetic cycles causing trout to move away
* Siltation from upstream which can affect insects (food source) abundance and spawning redds degraded.

Councillor Scott questioned what can be done to define the extent and contributing factor for trout decline/variations. He considered there was a possibility that any variations may be due to very warm ambient summer conditions (affecting water temperature and oxygen levels) and may even be cyclical. He noted that the Manawatu River Users Group which he thought could advocate for river health was principally a watercraft navigation advisory group. He was considering presenting a submission to Horizons Environment Committee to outline what the Manawatu Freshwater Anglers Club considered potential issues to be highlighted for redress. He supported the proposed lower limit and where treble hooks could be used to enhance the perception that the trout fishery does have pressures and its resilience and robustness is not guaranteed.

Chairman Cotsilinis concluded that the overall population is difficult to assess due to the size of the river and the anglers are experiencing seeing less fish or a catching less fish (i.e. more difficult to catch). He recently fished in the area and saw fish but high water temperatures meant that the fish were stressed and were not feeding.

After further discussion it was moved

***That the daily limit for trout be two (2) fish per angler per day for the Manawatu River downstream of Maunga Road Bridge (upstream
of Dannevirke)***

**Don Scott/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

Councillor Shortis requested that some research be considered to better understand the dynamic of the catchment looking at: surveying techniques, surrogates for ecosystem health, and spawning extent (habitat quality/quantity).

It was then moved

***That a research proposal be define d to determine the trout fish population dynamics of the Manawatu River system***

**Paul Shortis/Don Scott**

Carried

Dr Kavermann referred to Figure 1 page 47 of agenda that presented data for drift dive surveys of the Ruamahanga River and its tributaries. He noted that the Ruamahanga River system appear stressed and has a different dynamic to the Manawatu River in that there were lots of small trout. After further discussion it was moved

That the

***That the daily limit for trout be two (2) fish per angler per day for the Ruamahanga River and its major tributaries downstream of SH2***

**Aaron Passey/Chris O’Meara**

Carried

Discussion ensued on the Backcountry Licence being used for the Upper Rangitikei River and tributaries. It was noted that when signing up for the backcountry licence was by tick box from the website and free that 962 anglers obtained the licence but only 180 obtained a licence when a $25 fee was required to cover costs on the public liability insurance. It was agreed that it was necessary to seek confirmation with NZDF to have this public liability insurance was still a requirement. After further discussion and confirmation of an improved quote from insurance providers,

it was moved

***That an up to $10 fee be applied for the Wellington Backcountry Licence***

**Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

Dr Kavermann provided an overview of the spawning survey programme and noted that more up-to-date information in the tributaries of the Manawatu River are required.

After discussion it was then moved

***That staff be requested to undertake spawning surveys of the Manawatu River and its tributaries as part of the winter work programme***

**Strato Cotsilinis/Don Scott**

Carried

It was then moved

***that all other Angler Notice conditions remain the same***

**Jim Cook/Don Scott**

Carried

Council commended Dr Kavermann for the excellent report provided that covered all the pertinent points in such a clear manner.

It was clarified that the public liability insurance cost for the back country licence would be commensurate with the costs associated with providing and administering public liability insurance on back country licence for Wellington region – and included in the Forms and Fees Notice of the regulations.

1. **Project Report 1112- Rangitikei River Trout Fishery Management**

Dr Kavermann presented the project report 1112 for the Rangitikei River trout fishery management noting: that the report would be provided to Genesis Energy. He outlined the drift dives results conducted in the Moawhanga River and mid reaches of the Rangitikei River with healthy trout populations noted (very high trout density noted at Springvale). He noted that the effects of the flushing flows in the Moawhanga River needs further investigation into site selection to be able to assess the effectiveness of the water releases to flush sediment. He confirmed otolith and water samples collected from within the catchment for future analysis. He noted an increased compliance checking in the Upper Rangitikei River to ensure backcountry licence and fishing licences were being carried.

Dr Kavermann drew attention to the work programme planned for 2020 which builds on the programme of work carried out in 2019:

1. Trout surveys in the Moawhanga, Rangitikei (mid) and Upper Rangitikei rivers
2. Complete year 3 of water sampling for otolith research programme
3. Undertake independent instream habitat assessments of Moawhanga river drift dive sites
4. Liaise with DoC and NZDF for compliance work on Upper Rangitikei River.

Council congratulated the staff for the large amount of work being very competently completed at to Dr Kavermann for the high quality of the summary report.

It was then moved

***To receive the project report 1112 for the Rangitikei River trout fishery management in 2019***

**Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

1. **Project Report 1113 – River Control Fishery Assessment**

Dr Kavermann gave an overview of the project report noting that the Hutt River appeared to have a cyclical pattern in terms of trout numbers. He noted the relatively short term effects of works of stream bank erosion restoration in the Upper Hutt (opposite Gibbons Street). He noted the variation in visibility from the top of the catchment at Kaitoke being 12m and at Melling it had reduced to just over 2m. He noted there were still good numbers of trout throughout the system, and the fishery appeared to be robust to the effects of cross-blading in the Hutt catchment.

Dr Kavermann noted that the Waikanae River survey indicated low fish numbers and Councillor Francis noted that there had been low winter levels but it was confirmed that the fish ladder at the weir (for water intake) was allowing movement of trout above the weir to access spawning habitat. It was noted that the 50,000m3 could have a major short to medium effect on the fishery.

Dr Kavermann noted that there had been a small increase in rainbow trout numbers in the Otaki River.

Dr Kavermann confirmed that collection of samples of water and otoliths from the Hutt River will help identify and further confirm key spawning sites to protect in the catchment.

It was then moved

***To receive the project report 1113 for River Control Fishery Assessment in 2019***

**Malcolm Francis/John Hancock**

Carried

Council acknowledged the outstanding effort of the drift dive team and staff to complete the extensive drift dive programme and for Dr Kavermann in presenting a high quality summary report.

1. **R3 Marketing Programme**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the R3 programme progress with it still anticipated that efforts would be made to co-ordinate a angling programme on the Hutt River in spring 2019.

It was then moved

***To receive the report on the R3 Programme***

**Colin Shore/Aaron Passey**

Carried

1. **Indigenous Fish Bill Update**

Mr Teal indicated that the Select Committee had extended their hearing to allow for hearing of individual submissions. It was anticipated that the Select Committee would release preliminary findings and recommendations in July or August.

It was then moved

***To receive the report on the progress on Indigenous Fish Bill***

**Colin Shore/Aaron Passey**

Carried

1. **One Plan Implementation Update**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the work that had been undertaken by Horizons Regional Council on potential plan change to Nutrient management provisions.

The first set of changes to the nutrient management framework is a discrete set of proposed changes that includes:

* Recalibrating table 14.2 for Nitrogen loss to consider the latest science (including the updates of Overseer since the table was developed).
* Changes in policies and objectives to provide a viable pathway for intensive land users to apply for consent (discretionary consents) if they cannot meet the table values.

Horizons Regional Council held a series of small group sessions within the region in May 2019. Peter Wilson attended as a Fish & Game and provided a brief account on those sessions where he indicated that the use of discretionary consents rule could be used to simply grant consents to remove a problem for the Regional Council. The issue for Fish & Game to consider is the extent of transparency in decision making and openness in notification of any consents.

It was then moved

***To receive the report on the progress on One Plan Implementation and Proposed Plan Changes***

**Chris O’Meara/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

1. **Wairarapa Water Irrigation Project Update**

Mr Teal noted that from media reports in late May that the Water Wairarapa Ltd had been granted $800,000 from the Provincial Growth Fund to continue administration and investigations into the irrigation proposal. Councillor Shortis noted that $9.2 million had been already spent on the project but no environmental impact assessment had been forthcoming as part of the investigations. It was agreed that if the environmental effect is neutral or positive then the Fish & Game response to the project would be neutral also,

The Wairarapa Water Ltd company had been selling the concept of District Councils needing water surety following climate forecasts, and had indicated that central government support was important in gaining the confidence of the communities and investors. The benefits have been sold as:

* Summer flushing flows
* Intensification of land use (via irrigation)
* Lower valley N&P loading at or above limit
* Town (municipal) freshwater (can supply smaller supply dams cheaper.

It was also confirmed that the water price from the scheme was still estimated to be 26 cents to 28 cents per cubic metre.

It was agreed that Wellington Fish & Game Council would seek information (OIA) from Ministry of Regional Economic Development on what was contained in the application for monies and what this was going to be used for – e.g. investor ready documentation. It was also agreed to seek a summary of use of Greater Wellington Regional Council funds for the project which were expected to cease at the end of June 2019 and communications between key personnel in Council with the Wairarapa Water Ltd entity.

It was then moved

***To receive the update on the progress on Water Wairarapa proposals for dam and resulting irrigation options***

**Jim Cook/Aaron Passey**

Carried

Members of the Wairarapa Fish & Game Club (Chris Pearson, Simon Robertson, John Pansters, David Mill) left at 6.00pm

1. **Lake Wairarapa Management Update**

Mr Teal noted that there had been no progress publicly on the Treaty settlement – where two groups within Kahungunu iwi were challenging the mandating process. He did note that the Wairarapa Moana collective were continuing unabated with documentation for a transfer to a Statutory Reserve Board for the lake and Ruamahanga catchment. While Fish & Game are still seeking details of any formal Treaty settlement, Dr Kavermann had been informed that the water aspects of Boggy Pond and Matthews Lagoon was likely to be retained by the Department of Conservation and not be used as part of a cultural landscape redress.

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the fish removal project in Bartons Lagoon which was initiated in 2014 and the perch egg research on Matthews Lagoon started in 2017. Dr Kavermann was considering a more formal rebuttal of the interpretation of data collected in a recently published paper.

Council suspended business at 6.10pm and reconvened at 6.45pm

Dr Kavermann gave an overview of the standholder management at Lake Wairarapa and the administration work undertaken by Corinne Deans to collate information standholder tenure and agreed protocols such as confirmed licence purchase of principal and secondary standholders. Council commended the detailed work undertaken by Corrine Deans. Council reaffirmed the mandate to enforce the intent of stand tenure – and purchasing a licence was seen as a minimum requirement to mark up the site. Councillor Shore confirmed that it would be appropriate to re-engage communications with standholders to address key issues, including: raupo encroachment (and method for mechanical control), the need to maintain structures (including maimais and other larger), matching exact locations with records, and strict enforcement of rules. It was agreed that letters be sent to standholders where obvious breaches of rules appears to be occurring, and then letters be sent to all standholders before the season and hold a meeting(s) after August to engender action on stands to clean them up.

It was then moved

***To receive the update on the progress on Lake Wairarapa issues***

**Jim Cook/Colin Shore**

Carried

Hamish Carnachan left the meeting at 7.20pm

1. **Research Update**

Mr Teal indicated that he had further developed a summary of the research needs for the organisation following identification of information needs and then undertake a prioritisation of these. This will be refined for August with a view to encouraging some proposals be developed for funding.

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the eDNA project with a strategy being developed for sampling using filters retained instream for several hours. Dr Canning was also intending to measure detectability over different sampling time periods and also distance of detectability downstream from a ‘spawning site’ (DNA release).

Mr Teal also noted that Dr Canning had been progressing the research on native fish and trout interactions.

It was then moved

***To receive the update on the research progress***

**Malcolm Francis/Don Scott**

Carried

1. **Junior / Novice Participation**

Mr Teal confirmed that the Fish in Schools programme had been progressing with some schools being added and some removed but a total of ten schools participating.

Dr Kavermann noted that there had been a school project in Levin that involved outdoor recreation modules including trout fishing at the Otaki gravel lake.

It was then moved

***To receive the update on the junior novice participation programmes***

**Malcolm Francis/Don Scott**

Carried

1. **Access Issues Update**

Mr Teal provide a brief update of access issues at sites listed, with active management for hunters required at several sites:

* Otaki River Mouth – no incidents reported
* Pencarrow lakes – no incidents reported
* Koitiata lake – limited access (now private iwi land) to standholders (some additional interest from itinerant hunters)
* Waitarere Forest – open access but new forestry manager based in Auckland has little practical knowledge of site
* Tangimoana Forest and/or Tawhirihoe Scientific Reserve – no access available for this year
* Motua Reserve – transfer to iwi in settlement – no access for this year. More and more alnd will be used for cultural redress.
* Worksafe NZ - confirming reduced liability for landowners if recreational based activities (clarification resulting from court case)
* Walking Access Commission Review - notifying that a submission would be developed and submitted

Discussing ensued on the issue of addressing local of gamebird hunting habitat access and consideration of options (political, legal, social) for maintaining perpetual access for licence holders and general public to fish and hunt on public lands. This might mean registering a public interest on land that is used for cultural redress. It was agreed that Wellington F&GC would send a remit to NZ F&GC to investigate processes for maintaining access and for NZ Council to have capability and capacity to implement a plan. A draft would be developed for Wellington F&GC’s consideration prior to sending to NZ F&GC.

It was moved

***That Council receive the Access Issues update report***

**Jim Cook/Paul Shortis**

Carried

1. **Management Report - 15 March to 31 May 2019**

Clarification was sought on a number of matters:

* Councillor Francis was appointed to executive of Waikanae Conservation Plan committee
* GWRC managing iwi consultations at different pace to other stakeholders
* Dr Canning’s work on the NPS FM and NES has been diligent and outstanding in providing quality scientific rigour to the process
* Opaki Water Race consent – acknowledged as very inefficient water transfer that only a few commercial users are keen on retaining
* Dr Kavermann confirmed that one alleged offender may be arrested for failing to attend court hearing/

It was then moved that

***The Management Report for the period 15 March to 31 May 2019 be received.***

**Jim Cook/Chris O’Meara**

Carried

1. **Fish & Game Licence Sales**

Mr Teal referred to the summary in the project report documents noting that licence sales for fish were slightly up on previous year’s sales.

He also referred to the summary fro the project report documents for licence sales for game bird hunting and noted that they were also slightly up on previous year’s sales. This could in part be attributed to the communication given by Wellington Fish & Game regional staff when there was uncertainty as to the outcome of firearms legislation changes, and ensuring licence holders were given clear messaging as soon as possible.

It was moved that

***The report on Fish Licence Sales to 31 May 2019 and the report on Game Licence Sales to 31 May be received***

**Richard McIntyre /Aaron Passey**

Carried

1. **Expenditure and Financial Report**

Chairman Cotsilinis provided an overview of the key financial reporting.

After brief discussion it was moved

***That the Expenditure Report to 30 April 2019 and Financial Transactions for March and April 2019 be received***

**Don Scott/Chris O’Meara**

Carried

Mr Teal brought to the attention of Council the limitations of the current arrangements for operating the business credit card - in that total spend allowable per month is too low to be practical. It was agreed that Mr Teal investigate further the most appropriate limits or operating arrangements with ANZ Bank, and bring back any options to Council for approval.

1. **Correspondence**

A correspondence item was briefly discussed – A letter from a Wairarapa hunter expressing his displeasure at the NZ Fish & Game Council submission on firearms reform which he believed did a disservice to the wider community of firearms owners. Council requested that staff respond to the licenceholder indicating Wellington Fish & Game Council’s position and also point out possible registration for pest control officers who may get exemption for certain multi-shot firearms .

1. **Contribution Recognition**

This item was deferred as no recipients were available for this meeting.

Nominations for potential recipients included:

* Mike Burke – Rangiwahia – for habitat works and introducing novice anglers and hunters to the pursuits.
* Dr Adam Canning – in recognition of outstanding work on the supporting scientific work for the NPS FM and NES. It was suggested that in addition to the award that a fly rod/fly box would be appropriate.
1. **General Business**

Councillor Hancock brought to the attention of Council an action group called ‘*50 Shades of* *Green*’ that was seeking support from Fish & Game to increase awareness and compliance action on logging operations that were blocking up streams. Their specific concerns related to one good example where they were seeking checks on how the operators were dealing with buffers, who was responsible for the final clean up, and the extent of any compliance checks. They indicated that they were keen to focus on a specific example in the Wairarapa and will follow up with Fish & Game staff.

Councillor O’Meara sought clarification on the use of lead shot near waterways – specifically buck shot – and it was confirmed that the ban on lead shot related to hunting waterfowl, with some additional restrictions possible for the use of lead on Department of Conservation land.

Councillor Scott reiterated his support for put and take fisheries to support the R3 concept and programme. A report on establishing potential reservoir fisheries completed four years ago could be reviewed for relevance and be updated.

There being no further business the meeting was concluded at 8.15pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Upper Hutt Cosmopolitan Club, 11 Logan Street, Upper Hutt on 20 August 2019 at 3.00pm.

Chairman\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_