

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton, on Saturday 17 November 2018 commencing at 11.30am

AGENDA

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1. Apologies	
2. Appointment of Chairman	
3. General explanation of various laws affecting Councillors	
4. Appointment of the two Vice Chairmen	
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6. Appointment of representative on Land & Water Habitat Trust	
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B. Wilson
Chief Executive
6/11/2018

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton,
on Saturday October 13, 2018 commencing at 11.00am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: M. Young

Councillors: G. Annan, C. Carey, D. Cocks, W. Howard, N. Judy, A. Kerr, C. Sherrard,
B. Smith, E. Williamson.

Staff: B. Wilson, J. Dyer, D. Klee.

Visitors: P. Hardy (DoC), M. O'Donnell, B. Moore, G. Avery

1. APOLOGIES

P. Shaw, S. Smith, N. Juby (lateness).

It was moved;

that the apologies be accepted.

Howard/Annan CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

Councillor Kerr stated that he would have a conflict of interest in any discussion regarding the proposed property purchase.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 18 AUGUST 2018:

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of 18 August be accepted as a true and correct record.

Smith/Annan CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Councillor Annan asked whether the NZ Council had approved the salary increase for the RMA staff. Mr Wilson replied that the request had been declined and no reason had been given.

Discussion ensued over the lack of communication between NZ Council and the regions, and the increasing intrusion of the NZ Council on regional decision making.

5 CORRESPONDENCE:

Nil

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

Mr Wilson summarised the Fish & Game submission on the proposed Waikato District Plan noting that Mischa Davis had put a huge effort into the submission which concentrated on minimising the restrictions on wetland restoration work, but also on other issues such as getting hunting permitted as a rural activity and Fish & Game signage.

Mr Wilson spoke on the recent meeting between DoC, F&G, and Kiwi Rail to discuss the proposed double tracking of the railway line through the Whangamarino Wetland, 7km of which would be bordering F&G wetlands. There were numerous issues with the proposal including impacts on hydrology and water quality. In the medium term, 10-15 years, the introduction of fast express trains on this route would make the three railway crossings that provide access to F&G wetlands no longer viable in their present form. Discussion took place on the alternatives to the existing crossings with it noted that an underpass at the McKenzie wetland would have issues with the high groundwater level. An alternative access, constructing a bridge across the Mangatawhiri River, could cost some \$200,000.

Councillor Juby arrived at 11.30am.

In reply to a question, Mr Klee stated that the water levels in the Flax block had been reinstated to 1.7m.

Mr Klee updated the meeting on his recent discussions with DoC concerning proposed concessions for storage sheds in the Kopuatai wetland and Flax Block. This was considered by Councillors to be a revenue gathering exercise and concern was expressed that the fees were excessive, and the funds would not be spent on the wetland. Councillors also emphasised that hunters ran predator control programmes and controlled invasive weeds. Doubt was expressed that DoC knew the extent of or appreciated these hunter activities. The Conservation Act stated that the fees had to be reasonable. Mr Hardy provided a DoC perspective that they had a statutory mandate to collect concessions for structures on the DoC estate and exceptions were rarely granted. Mr Klee had contacted the legal advisers in other F&G regions to obtain a national perspective and to determine whether they had similar issues. It appeared that this was an issue currently restricted to the Waikato, but which could act as a precedent elsewhere.

Mr Klee spoke on the Te Kauwhata Waste Water Treatment Plant consents and expressed his disappointment at the lack of consultation with the public consultative group set up as part of the consent process. A land option appears to have been excluded from further consideration, but no explanation had been given as to why.

It was moved;

that further to section 48 of the local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely discussion on the purchase of land

<u>General subject of each matter to be considered:</u>	<u>Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter:</u>	<u>Grounds under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution</u>
Land purchase	Good reason to withhold exists under Section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982	Section 48(1)(a)(i)

Smith/Cocks CARRIED

It was moved;

that Council moves out of public excluded meeting.

Annan/Cocks CARRIED

Council rose for lunch at 12.30pm and resumed at 1.30pm.

Mr Wilson spoke on the financial statements, informing Councillors that the surplus for the year would be some \$560,000 mainly due to the mitigation agreement with NZTA negotiated by Mr Klee, and that Council had operated within its overall budget constraints.

Councillor Annan asked whether, as stated in the accounts, Mr Flower had been offered reparation for a game offence. Mr Wilson replied that reparation is no longer being offered and thus Mr Flower had been offered diversion.

It was moved;

that the CE Bimonthly report and Financial Statements be accepted.

Annan/Cocks CARRIED

7. OSH REPORT:

The OSH report for October 2018 was tabled.

8. GOVERNANCE POLICY REVIEW:

The Governance Policy Review was tabled.

It was moved;

that all existing policies be reaffirmed.

Smith/Annan CARRIED

9. NZF&GC MEETING 21-22 SEPTEMBER 2018:

Councillor Sherrard summarised the draft minutes of the recent NZF&GC meeting.

Discussion ensued on the current audits being carried out on the North Canterbury, Central South Island and Hawkes Bay Councils.

Ben Moore left the meeting at 1.40pm.

Discussion followed on the role of the NZ Council. Concerns raised by Councillors included:

- The lack of transparency due to the overuse of Public Excluded sessions
- The lack of communication from the NZ Council; for example, no explanation had been provided as to why Council's funding application had been refused.
- Martin Taylor's comments that structural changes were required to the entire Fish and Game organisation.

After extensive discussion, Councillors agreed that the basis of any such review should be the autonomy of the regions as stated in the Conservation Act. Councillors supported a review of the levy system, and of current regional and national staffing levels.

It was moved;

that the NZ Council be informed of the concerns of the Auckland/Waikato Council over the lack of transparency, poor communications with regions, and the proposed structural review.

Cocks/Williams CARRIED

10. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Mr Dyer updated Councillors on the enhancement project on the North Emmett wetland which is being funded by Synlait.

Councillor Kerr advised that the Te Kauwhata F&G club had gone into abeyance with some \$22,000 in funds that were currently managed by Mr D. Teklenberg on behalf of the club. Councillors agreed that the funds could be transferred to the Land & Water Habitat Trust to be spent on wetlands in the Te Kauwhata area.

Councillor Howard spoke on the threat of trout farming and Councillors agreed that momentum was growing for another push for it to be legalised.

Mr Klee on behalf of the field staff thanked retiring Councillors, Brendon Smith and Craig Carey for their support over the last three years.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 2.30pm.



KiwiAnglers-Four-step Plan

The Fishery-

The primary objective of "KiwiAnglers " (KA) is to protect our Kiwi angling heritage and traditions. We seek to preserve freedom for ordinary New Zealanders to access to our rivers, lakes and other fishing waters for angling, and to enjoy a quality angling experience.

Citizens and Residents of New Zealand-

We affirm that every citizen or resident fisher in possession of a fishing licence has the right to enjoy a quality angling experience in all present freshwater fisheries now and for future generations as we have in the past. It is our angling heritage and the quality and traditions of the angling experience that we are seeking to protect.

Why Now?

(KA) came into being because of our perception that our traditional access to quality angling is under threat from several developments. This includes deterioration of the quality of the environment in freshwater fisheries which has led to a reduction in angling opportunities and has focused anglers into a reduced number of sites that still offer good angling experiences. This trend has been exacerbated by a recent very significant increase in tourist numbers visiting New Zealand including visiting anglers.

What we support.

We support efforts to improve water quality, and to maintain access to fisheries. However, we think that more needs to be done now to provide a regulatory framework to address the greatly increased pressure on our fisheries due to the influx of tourist anglers. This is urgent given the rapid increase in numbers seeking access to our fisheries.

Guiding Principles.

To guide our thinking, we have affirmed what we think there are some widely agreed and fundamental principles in the following order of priority

1. That the fishery is the- priority
2. Resident Anglers
3. New Zealand Commercial Guides
4. Visiting Anglers

Priorities for Action

KIWI ANGLERS



PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Our immediate focus is upon changing our current regulatory environment to address the huge increase in tourist anglers seeking access to our fisheries. We aim to preserve the quality of the angling experience available. To achieve this, we seek to minimise the adverse effects of increased tourist angling pressure on the angling experience available in New Zealand and to ensure that visiting anglers make a commensurate contribution to the costs of maintaining and regulating our fisheries.

New Zealand Commercial Guides-

(KA) have promoted the introduction of a licence for fishing guides as an important first step to help regulation of the increase in the number of tourist anglers. Regulation of this area is required to establish that the number of guides is known and can be regulated, that guides are New Zealand residents, and that standards are in place for guides. (KA) does seek to ban non-resident commercial sports fishing guides from practicing in New Zealand freshwater fisheries.

We further envisage that establishing a licence for guides will provide data to establish those fisheries that are under greatest pressure. This can guide further regulation of those fisheries. We think that such further regulation will be required given the current increase in pressure from tourist anglers. (KA) Support the commercial guiding of our freshwaters providing the guides are a licenced resident sports fishing guide. Therefore, (KA) support the New Zealand Fish and Game Council licencing proposal for sports fishing guides.

Non-Resident Anglers and Guides-

(KA) does not wish the exclusion of overseas anglers but would like to see regulation of access on certain rivers that are under a high level of angling pressure. This might include introduction of systems to limit the number of tourist anglers accessing these rivers and other changes such as non-fishing days, to protect the fishery and the angling experience available.

Suggestions on some other measures that could be considered

- Increase non-resident licence fees to ensure an adequate contribution to maintenance of the fishery and the cost of administering new regulatory requirements. By way of example- \$50.00 per day
- Restrict the number of fishing days available to non-resident anglers on rivers under pressure. By way of example-Total fishing days allowed per season 10-12 days.
- Restriction of the number of fishing days available to non-resident anglers could include being unable to fish Friday/Saturday/Sunday. This would preserve priority access to NZ resident anglers on weekends.
- Establish a waiting list to obtain a Non-resident licence for the restricted fisheries. Access to fragile back country fisheries for Non-resident fishers would be with a NZ sports fisher guide only basis to respect the MoU, item 7 between the NZ Commercial Guides Assn and F & G.

KIWI ANGLERS



PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Regulations would be administered by Fish & Game and funded directly from the increased licence fee. The funding would be distributed in proportion within the F & G regions of the restricted freshwater fisheries. With each F & G region determining the restriction, an online booking system would need to be established.

All the above should be discussed collectively with, the Fish & Game Council, the New Zealand Federation of Freshwater Anglers, the New Zealand commercial Fishing Guides Assn, anglers, freshwater fishing clubs, and then presented to the Government for ratification.

Other related issues

The quality of the angling experience is affected greatly if too many anglers are competing for the same water. The fishery is also affected with fish subject to constant angling pressure and being caught on more than one occasion. Consequently, addressing angler numbers is seen as our first responsibility. However, other issues also affect the quality of the angling experience. This includes disturbance by helicopters, jet boats, jet skis and other craft. Kiwi Anglers will therefore maintain an interest in issues such as the potential regulation of the number of helicopter flights that can access some waters and setting aside some rivers and areas in busy lakes where angling can take place in a peaceful environment.

Your Faithfully

David Linklater, Jim Grierson, John Highton

On behalf of KiwiAnglers

Bi Monthly Managers Report**Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Meeting November 2018**

OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT**Project 1112 Banding**

John Dyer has been assisting an Auckland University student to trap and band pukeko at Ambury Park in Auckland. People who are new to banding are required by DoC to undergo a supervised period until they gain sufficient competence to go up a grade. This is also a requirement of the university Ethics Committee that vets such study applications. The traps being used are a variation on the "lily-pad" style where birds push their way in through the netting but can't find the now closed way out. Bird are then caught-up, (and they bite and scratch with a vengeance), then bled, (just a few drops from a vein in their wing), into a very thin pipette. This blood sample is used to determine their gender, relatedness and so on.

Project 1116 Trend Counts

Mallard breeding season observations: This year's breeding season started well, but the drier than average conditions in the last 6 weeks have constrained high quality brood rearing wetland areas. Hopefully many of the early broods have made it through to fledging and are therefore much more likely to survive. Later broods are going to find the going much tougher and greater losses are expected. We need some good consistent rain in November to reverse this trend. Worryingly, water temperatures are already well above average and David Klee has been communicating with several waste water treatment plant operators at locations that regularly experience botulism outbreaks to remind them to be vigilant.

Aka Aka Canal: John Dyer has been assisting Ian Southy to do waterfowl counts along the Aka Aka canals bordering the Waikato Delta. These counts will be compared by Dr Murray Williams to Wildlife Service ones done many years ago along the same transects using the unpublished data Murray has for these. Retrolens historic aerial photos indicates there have been considerable changes in this area over the decades as farmers have exploited newer technology to drain lower lying areas beside these canals. What were once wetlands are now just grassy paddocks.

Project 1117 Gamebird Research

Avian influenza research. David is co-author of a recently published paper titled *Ecology of avian influenza A(H5) and A(H7) viruses in wild birds in New Zealand*.

Project 1122 Gamebird Harvest Surveys

Gamebird harvest survey supplementary questions: Every year we take the time to ask hunters a number of supplementary questions during our harvest surveys. This is to gather feedback in an unbiased fashion to help inform council regarding hunter opinion on topics such as changes to harvest regulations.

Question: Would you support an extension to the dabbling duck hunting season to 6 weeks or is 4 weeks long enough?

The majority (60%) of hunters supported an increase in season length to 6 weeks, many added the caveat that this should only occur if bird numbers were high. This council uses season length as its primary tool to regulate harvest and to mitigate potential adverse effects on the mallard population through having extensions that encroach into the breeding season. The last two years have seen higher population estimates than the previous 4 years and if this continues there may be some justification to increase the season length back to 6 weeks for the 2020 season when game regulations are reviewed next year.

Do you use a dog to retrieve your shot game?

Only 47% of hunters always use a dog to retrieve their shot game, whilst 36% never use one. The remainder occasionally used a dog or used their friends' dogs.

Would you support grey teal becoming a game bird?

The results of this question were somewhat surprising. We had always and perhaps naively assumed that hunters would welcome a new game bird on schedule 1 of the Act with open arms. What we found instead is that only 36% supported the proposition, 45% were opposed and 19% did not know or did not care.

Project 1161 Trout Releases

The Lake Arapuni release was conducted and plans for tagged fish for kids fishing day were set for November.

Project 181 Gamebird Control

Pukeko take up most staff control time in terms of explaining to people that F&G aren't funded to spend a week trying to capture pukeko at their back yard and also that unfortunately they can't be relocated either as they just home back – even when removed 80km away. Once the hard decisions have been made we can assist people who want to take the next step.

OUTPUT 2 HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

Project 1211 R.M.A.

Proposed Waikato District Plan: The district council is now in the process of summarising the submissions and they'll call for further submissions once this summary is available. We anticipate that they will be requesting further submissions in the early part of 2019 with hearings being held in the second part of 2019.

Project Martha – Waihi: This is being fast tracked through to hearing. We have now received the Council's Report which recommends that the proposed abstraction of 20% of flow occur when the Ohinemuri River is over a certain flow (2xMedian Annual Low Flow); mitigations are referenced in the report but not included in any of the conditions. We are proposing conditions to the Council which will minimise the impact of abstraction on trout habitat and mitigate any residual effects on the extent of trout habitat. These include a

suitable temperature threshold above which abstraction cannot occur, and riparian planting to increase shade. We hope that by the time we reach hearing we can agree on a suitable set of conditions. The Hearing is scheduled to commence 12 November with Adam and Anna working on evidence for this.

Thames Wastewater Treatment Plant Consent Renewal: We have received notice that this consent is being renewed. Our main focus will be management of avian botulism which has been an issue at this plant, with nearby wetlands and bird populations also affected. We will also be looking to see that the cumulative load of contaminants to the Waihou River be reduced.

Healthy Rivers (PC 1) Ongoing: The Council has indicated there will be pre-hearing technical forums at the end of November to start of December 2018. These will be relevant for science and economic evidence.

The Hearings Administrator has indicated that hearings can be expected to commence at the end of February 2019, and last for anything from 3-6 months from there. The hearings will be separated into topics each allocated a block of time.

Whangamarino Weir Section 128 Review: Two further technical memos have been produced the first by BECCA consultants who are contracted by the Regional Councils regulatory arm to provide independent scientific advice. The second report has been prepared by JACOBS on behalf of the Department of Conservation. A meeting is scheduled for the 30th of October to further disseminate this information and a verbal update will be given at the council meeting. Regardless of the outcomes of the further technical investigations, we believe that it would be prudent to plan ahead and give some thought as to how we can minimise the amount of sediment being deposited in the wetland and use a more solution focused approach. There are several processes happening in the catchment including the implementation of a WRA application being managed by WRC which aims to specifically look at sedimentation. There is an opportunity for all parties to work together and leverage off this work to look at possible solutions and explore further funding opportunities.

Open Country Dairy: We signed a Memorandum of understanding with open country Dairy in 2016. After it was agreed that it would be everyone's best interest for OCD to withdraw their previous consent application and apply for a short-term interim consent to allow them to budget for and implement an improved treatment regime. The draft application which was due August 1 has not yet been provided. We had already extended the timeframes previously from 1 May 2017. We are in regular contact with the applicant's representatives and have been assured that a draft will be forwarded on shortly.

Inghams Consent: We have forwarded on two draft applications to the new consent mitigation manager for projects we are trying to help facilitate with landowners in the Waitoa catchment where we have previously conducted site visits.

Te Kauwhata WWTP: David has written to the project manager to obtain a further update on this process.

Project 1221 Council Land

With the improving weather pest-plants have starting their growing phase again, so spraying has begun in the Dean Wetland, McKenzie Wetland, Cathcart Wetland and Shepherd Wetland. This time a marker spray was used to help people grazing stock in our property to avoid sprayed paddocks without a 7-day withholding period. In point of fact, when told about the spraying, the person concerned moved their stock off-site anyway. However a number of hunters visiting the area noticed the red-marker spray and have asked about it.

North Emmett: This phase of the wetland work being done by Neil Rankin, the physical removal of floating water-weeds using a 12-tonne digger, is now complete. It is quite remarkable how Neil can “walk on water” in his machine using the piled-up weeds to stand his digger on and there must be few other operators with his degree of experience or skill – or nerve!

We also have courtesy of Synlait, (who are funding this work at no cost to F&G licence buyers, as wetland mitigation for their own consent work nearby in Pokeno), an excellent drone photo pre this work. This will be followed by another one post the remedial work. Still to be done shortly is planting of the site according to a professionally prepared vegetation management plan. While this is somewhat late in the year, the low-lying nature of much of the wetland site means the plant roots will have ready access to water and should thrive regardless. A portable loo is on site for the tree-planters and, when we last heard, two companies were short listed for the job. While there Neil removed an old culvert and buried a tangled old Taranaki fence and other rubbish along the shoreline by the entrance. These had been a particular hinderance to boat launching in the past for the purposes of water-weed control. The track around the Wetland, which had a low and waterlogged section, has now also been topped up and that should make it a lot easier for the planters to shift their trailer-loads of trees to the required positions and for follow up release-spraying and so on. Nearby gorse has been sprayed out to reduce the risk of invasion into the planted area.

An issue cropped up at this site regarding the new Proposed Waikato District Council District Plan which imposes severe conditions on “earthworks and vegetation clearance” on anyone wanting to do wetland restoration work in wetlands classified as Significant Natural Areas. These include most of our F&G wetlands. The District Council thinking seems to be that, if wetlands are fenced off and left alone they will look after themselves. Those of us who are familiar with wetlands will know that the huge inputs of sediment and fertiliser runoff, coupled with aggressive invasive weeds, will destroy a wetland in just a matter for a few years if no significant active management is permitted. We are in the process of submitting on this, however despite only being a Proposed Plan, the Plan’s restrictions within SNA’s are immediate in effect. However, a thorough investigation showed that this particular site is not an SNA, perhaps because it was until a decade or so ago just a drained paddock. With minimal earthworks we were back then able to raise a small coffer dam around the drain outlet and back-flood the paddock, having been told at the time by Franklin District Council, (which was abolished 31 October 2010), that no consent was required. Neil’s current work is simply maintenance.

Significantly this area was Gazetted, 27 January 2005, as “Land Acquired for Conservation Purposes...subject to Section 7 of the Conservation Act 1987...for the purposes of management of sports fish and game... vested in the Fish & Game Council, Auckland/Waikato region”.

Because this area is not a SNA, the old Operative Franklin District Council Plan rules still apply while the Proposed Waikato District Council Plan submissions are still being heard. These state that “wetland and wildlife habitats conservation is a Permitted Activity where wetlands and habitats are managed to protect their natural values, (and it also allows as permitted activities), weirs for water level restoration associated with wetland and habitat management”. Fish & Game worked closely with the now defunct Franklin District Council to get these rules in the form they are in. It would certainly help if the Waikato District Plan rules, after submissions are considered, make similar provisions to make ongoing wetland management possible. This is essential if our wetlands are to survive as the viable wildlife habitats they are.

As an amusing aside; the presence of a nesting bird, reported to be “either a bittern or a blue heron” in the reeds of this Wetland, looked like it would interfere with proceedings. However, a closer inspection by staff revealed it was a feral goose of the farm variety. After hissing at us for a couple of days it hatched its eggs out and removed its brood from harms’ way just before the digger arrived. A padlock problem also threatened to hold things up, but the “wrong key”, supplied by John Dyer, (who had successfully tried it beforehand!), turned out to be perfectly satisfactory once the padlock got a squirt of Inox penetrating oil.

In honour of our previous agreement with Franklin District Council, when the initial work was done in this area to create a new wetland, the native reeds present, (that coincidentally housing the nesting goose), and also a healthy native carex bed was left intact. The remaining water-plants, (now all gone), were every sort of exotic weed you can think of. The ducks, (mallards, teal and shoveler), are already back in there and in fact Neil said the ducklings were actually following the digger bucket around perhaps for the insects it disturbed.

Cathcart Wetland: Neil is clearing drains of weeds and removing exotic waterweeds from the Cathcart-East part of this site but, it should be noted, he is not doing any new earthworks, changing any inverts or removing any native vegetation – unless you include gorse! A blowout in the bund around this site had dropped water-levels considerably. This has since been remedied. John Dyer has identified several boat launch sites for future spraying work here and Neil has tidied these up to make launching easier. Also a blocked Railway culvert that supplies this site with water had been previously cleared by F&G staff. With the tracks created by the digger through the dense glyceria, staff can now get in and also spray the drain leading from this Railway culvert, so the next storm can blow all the sediment out and make a much more efficient supply.

This wetland has become overgrown in recent years and the open water area much reduced. It will be part of the staff summer work programme to get in and spray this encroachment back to re-establish the original area of open water. Even though this is a Significant Natural Area, we have confirmed with WDC there is nothing to preclude spraying of weeds. This site is not a balloted one, so there are no hunters attached to this site to maintain these weeds, nor any club tasked with its maintenance.

Blythen Wetland: Neil Rankin has also moved into the Blythen Wetland to effect repairs to the weir structure there. The drain sides have now been shored up with 150x50mm treated tongue & groove and plans are afoot by Councillor David Cocks to plant next to this with a species with very long roots that will help stabilise this site. The best way to do this repair was to place the 12-tonne digger on the neighbours’ side of this drain and obviously their permission was needed. However, the Waikato District Council, notwithstanding that our

District Council consent requires us to consult with neighbours, would not give us that name or number of the absentee owner under the Privacy Act, just a PO Box. Fortunately, a Companies Office search of the PO Box number gave us the names of the 2 equal shares partners based in St Lukes, Auckland, who purchased it off the Singaporean previous owner. These new owners plan to subdivide the site into 80 residential lots. However, nothing beats neighbour's for local knowledge and after cruising down Dean Road and seeing someone feeding Bobby calves, (beside the original Dean homestead), by the end of the day we had the name and contact number of the farmer who has the grazing lease. With this, we now had the appropriate permission we needed to cross the drain to his side the next morning.

Dean Wetland: It is always pleasing to see bitterns, spotless crakes, dabchicks and other wetland wildlife. However finding an unexpected film crew is not the run of the mill. When asked, "Who let you in here?", F&G staff were told, "Papa, the Kaumatua for this area". They then seemed puzzled we had never heard of him! Since their activities seemed to be harmless enough, and they thoroughly picked up after themselves and also it seems they thought they were on DoC land they did have authority to be on, (allegedly), then no harm was done. But the name of the company, "Surprize Films", seems particularly apt!

Project 1231 Non Council Land

Te Onetea Stream: The Waikato Regional Council currently has a long-reach digger putting poles in the Te Onetea Stream to make a weed trap. The Te Onetea flows between the Waikato River and Lake Waikare. Yellow flag iris and other undesirable weeds from the Waikato River are getting into Lake Waikare and the Whangamarino Wetland downstream via the Te Onetea Stream and this is an experiment to try and intercept them

A boat ramp on the stream is popular for hunters seeking access to Lake Waikare. The weed trap will be navigable for boats, but hunters need to be aware of it if they suddenly come across it. It will be appropriately marked to warn them, but with vandalism and etc., they shouldn't rely on that.

Whanganui River headwaters survey: Adam collected samples in September and October. In addition, 3 stream gauges were installed that were donated by University of Waikato for the project. Adam will need to manually gauge the streams on several occasions to use the data. The addition of stream gauging to the project will give a total volume of sediment rather than a single snapshot.

Wetland Site Visits: David conducted 2 site visits with Waikato Regional Council Resource Use and Catchment Management Officers to try and leverage from various revenue streams and develop partnership projects with landowners, restoring wetland habitat.

Flax Block and Kopuatai: David has had further dialogue with Myles and the Upper Piako Committee. At the time of writing we have not had any further updates regarding the cost structures being proposed for the huts. The area manager has responded to a previous email stating that he was open to exploring what options are available for storage sheds, although on the advice received to date it appears that it will likely be a concessions process. If that is the case it would be helpful to seek some feedback from the permissions team and David Spiers regarding the likely cost implications, so hunters go into the process fully informed. If hunters are required to pay similar processing fees and charges as the proposed hut concessions it will likely have a bearing on whether or not many will continue to maintain

such structures on DOC land. I have invited David Spiers in for a meeting to discuss this topic and other issues where we are working closely with his staff such as Healthy Rivers and the section 128 review for Whangamarino Weir.

Mill Drain: We had another meeting to discuss the proposed clearance activities at the outlet of the mill drain into Lake Waikare. The drain has high levels of arsenic that exceed ANZECC guideline trigger levels. We recently received a further report that showed that all spoil previously removed from the drain also exceeded values which makes it suitable for reuse on agricultural land. All this contaminated spoil will need to be removed from the farmland and stored in an appropriate facility. The base of the mill drain is on the border of high value wetland sites that we have restored with the help of WCEET and the Game Bird Habitat trust. Our position remains that if contamination is found to be at similar levels in this portion of the drain, removal is the only option. During the meeting we also questioned the need to actually do the digger works and presented historical imagery showing a massive widening of the drain over time. The invert levels have also been reduced over time and we questioned what evidence the council had that the drain needed to be dug out? The answer was that other than anecdotal evidence there wasn't any. There is some weed growth occurring in the drain, but this could be dealt with through herbicide application rather than digging. We have been asking ICM for some time to develop a more iterative process to determine the need to do such proposed works. A classic point in case occurred on the Hauraki plains in the Tee head canal where planned works were cancelled at the last minute, because the Piako comprehensive consent required the measurement of invert levels for any works occurring that could affect wetland water levels. In this instance, those invert levels revealed that the section of drain to be cleaned was already 2m below the surrounding drainage network and therefore the proposed works would achieve nothing. In our opinion these types of checks and balances should become routine. You would think that even the local catchment boards would agree that there is no point spending money on cleaning drains when the information shows that it has no tangible benefit.

Comprehensive Catchment Consents: Feedback was provided on ICMs annual work programmes. Similar to the issue with drainage consents, we have asked for a more holistic approach to catchment management. We have requested to work with WRC staff on a few key catchments that are having continual ongoing issues and come up with a long-term catchment-based mitigation package based on sound scientific river management principles.

Beehives: John Dyer assisted a wetland owner who was concerned that 21 beehives had arrived on her property unannounced. All hives must by law have ID on them and that unique identity number made it possible for F&G staff to contact the hive owner in Tauranga who said the adjoining farmer had advised him to "put them in there". He is now going to contact the wetland owner direct and I would imagine she won't need to buy honey for a while.

While this may sound amusing, these hives are directly in the way of any hunters trying to use one of the main foot access tracks. This same problem has also surfaced on nearby DoC land. For hunters who are allergic to bees it is a particular concern. Blocking tracks, unformed legal roads and gateways with beehives is also illegal for these sorts of reasons. Willows provide pollen in their hanging catkins very early in the year when there is little else for bees around, so space beside wetlands which often also have manuka is premium. Apparently, the sale of the old Sutton property at the end of Wattle Rd, Whangamarino will

allow a new beekeeper into the area, though Summer-Glow Apiaries are already just across the boundary on F&G land.

OUTPUT 3 PARTICIPATION

Project 1311 Access negotiation

Access signs were checked on opening day with replacements needed at Karapiro.

Project 1331 Magazine/supplement

Adam and I wrapped up the annual fish season newsletter that will go out in November.

Project 1341 Other Publications

Adam continues to produce the reel life blog and added the free giveaway data to the angler survey report. About 70 anglers of the 3000+ that receive the reel life notification responded compared with about 1000 that took the angler survey.

The angler survey draft report was finished and is awaiting review.

OUTPUT 4 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Project 1431 Liaison advocacy

Kids Fishing Days: Adam assisted the Tokoroa Fishing Association with their kids fishing day and will assist DoC in a fishing day for Ngahinapouri School.

Open Day Lake Ngaroto: Adam also attended an open day at Lake Ngaroto with Councillors Annan and Shaw looking at constructed wetlands.

Sponsorship: Adam was able to secure 12 fishing rods and 100's of soft baits for the Tokoroa take a kid fishing competition on November 2-4.

National Aquatic Invasive Species: Adam attended the meeting in Wellington and the revamp of Check Clean Dry is well underway.

Fish Passage Advisory Group meeting: Mischa attended the national fish passage advisory group meeting on behalf of Fish and Game.

Adam gave a talk to the Hamilton Anglers Club preseason.

OUTPUT 5 LAW ENFORCEMENT

Project 1511 Ranging

Owhango: Adam has been ranging on his water sampling trips and spotted 5 intoxicated anglers fishing prior to the season opener in Owhango. Due to the lack of cell phone reception Adam had to go to a local service station to use a phone to request backup. Local police did respond after a lengthy phone call to the call centre, but the anglers drove off prior to backup arriving.

**B. Wilson,
Chief Executive**