

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 162nd MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW
ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 16th FEBRUARY 2017 AT 12.00PM**

Present

Murray Ferris, Lindsay Lyons, Barry Roderick, Laurance Tamati, Sandy Bull, Steve Scragg, David Woolner, Ken Coombes, Peter Storey (departed 2.40pm), and Alan Baird.

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson, John Meikle, Nigel Simpson, Lynne Sands, Eben Herbert, Carmel Veitch, Anthony van Dorp (Eastern Fish & Game); Don Rood, Grant Dyson (New Zealand Fish & Game); Kevin Williams (Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council); Michel Dedual (Department of Conservation); Ray Dunlop (Wildfowlers Association) and Sandy Lawrie (ex Eastern Fish and Game Councillor, arrived c.2pm).

1.0 WELCOME

Cr Murray Ferris opened the meeting at 12.00pm and welcomed Councillors, staff, Don Rood (Communications Manager NZ Fish & Game), Michel Dedual (Department of Conservation Taupo Fishery), Kevin Williams (Chairman Hawkes Bay Fish and Game Council) and visitors.

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 Apologies were received from Crs Neal Hawes and Annaka Davis, Helen Neale and Dave Conley (Department of Conservation), Ken Raureti (Bay of Plenty Conservation Board), Colin Paton, and Ray Bushell.

2.2 Cr Murray Ferris and Andy Garrick advised the meeting that Colin Paton was very unwell and had been in the ICU at Waikato Hospital for the past week.

2.3 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Ken Coombes) that the apologies for the 162nd meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [17/02/2.3]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (1 DECEMBER 2016)

3.1 *Agreed (Sandy Bull/Lindsay Lyons) that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2016 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [17/02/3.1]*

4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY

4.1 There were no items for inclusion in Council policy.

5.0 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Cr Lindsay Lyons requested an update regarding Mercury Energy's management of Waikato River levels noting a recent article in the press that he had seen written by Graham Sperry. Andy Garrick advised that Fish & Game had made formal enquiries to Waikato Regional Council and was awaiting advice from them that consent conditions were being adhered to. He pointed out that Eastern Fish & Game had been heavily involved with the 2004 consenting process, and in recognition of the impacts the proposed/new operating regime would have on riverine habitats, had been party to the process of determining appropriate mitigation for these impacts which involved the setting up and funding of the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust.

6.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

- Alan Baird - Waterfowl preserves
- Andy Garrick/John Meikle - Display of museum items (subsequently deferred until a later meeting due to time constraints).

7.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

7.1 No conflict of interest items were identified.

8.0 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

8.1 Andy Garrick noted that Council had previously committed to reviewing the appointment of officers at the beginning of each calendar year.

8.2 Cr Murray Ferris left the Chair and Andy called for nominations for the position of Chairman.

8.3 *Moved (Lindsay Lyons/Steve Scragg) that Cr Murray Ferris be nominated for Council Chairman. [17/02/8.3]*

8.4 There were no further nominations and Cr Murray Ferris was declared Chairman.

8.5 Nominations were called for the position of Deputy Chairman.

8.6 *Moved (Alan Baird/Murray Ferris) that Lindsay Lyons be nominated for Deputy Chairman. [17/02/8.6]*

8.7 There were no further nominations and Cr Lindsay Lyons was declared Deputy Chairman.

8.8 Nominations were called for the position of New Zealand Council appointee.

8.9 *Moved (Steve Scragg/Barry Roderick) that Cr Lindsay Lyons be nominated for NZ Council appointee. [17/02/8.9]*

8.10 There were no further nominations and Cr Lindsay Lyons was declared NZ Council appointee.

8.11 Council discussed the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Charitable Trust (WCEECT) appointment.

8.12 *Agreed (Sandy Bull/Steve Scragg) that Matt McDougall be re-appointed to the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust. [17/02/8.12]*

8.13 Cr Murray Ferris informed Council that members of the Manager's Performance and Remuneration Committee were usually elected for a 3 year term, but suggested that Council may wish to take the opportunity to review membership of that committee now, with a view to appointing an additional member to the committee for succession purposes.

8.14 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Lindsay Lyons) that David Woolner be appointed to the Manager's Performance and Remuneration Committee taking the total number of Councillors on the committee to four. [17/02/8.14]*

8.15 Council discussed whether there was a need to re-elect officers annually noting that Eastern was the only Council doing so. Council agreed that an annual review enabled Council to address concerns and to provide opportunity for others to take on positions in the event that some needed to step down.

9.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2017-18 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

9.1 Andy Garrick opened the Council discussion and informed Council that this was an opportunity to review progress on current priorities, and the priorities themselves, as a first step towards developing the 2017-18 Operational Work Plan. Andy sought an indication from Council whether it was happy with its current direction, or whether

there were changes it wanted to work areas or projects for incorporation into the 2017-18 plan.

9.2 Cr Barry Roderick commented on earlier discussions about licence revenue being Eastern Region's and Fish & Game's greatest risk and suggested that "Increasing Licence Revenue" should be considered as a fifth priority for this region. Carmel Veitch suggested this may be a matter that should or would be better addressed by the NZ Council. Andy Garrick agreed that maintaining licence revenue did need to be considered at a national level and advised that this had been discussed at some length at the recent managers meeting, but noted this did not prevent Eastern Region from taking a closer look at the issues and options and applying a regional perspective to it. Andy noted that some of the licence sales analysis work Kate Thompson had recently been undertaking had indicated some promising leads worth following up on, and making licence revenue another priority was entirely appropriate. Staff could provide examples of this at Council's April meeting.

9.3 The four existing priorities were examined in turn and discussion included the following.

9.4 *Enhancement of habitat for greylard production*

- Cr Sandy Bull commented on the lack of large wetlands in the Gisborne area and whether we could look for opportunities to create new large wetlands there? Andy Garrick commented that we would be happy to look at any opportunity that might be available, but noted that it may be more productive and cost effective in the short term at least, to focus our primary efforts on improving productivity of existing water there being a large number of 'barren' stock ponds in that country. Andy made the point too that we need to be conscious of the ongoing maintenance costs associated with creating new wetlands that we add to the inventory of wetlands we currently actively manage. He suggested that we should be looking to work more collaboratively with other people and groups to achieve the outcomes we're seeking, and referred to Fish & Game Officer Nathan Burkepile's recent work with landowners in the Hawke's Bay region. Cr Murray Ferris added that a lot of schools are now getting behind environmental projects as volunteers.
- Cr Barry Roderick questioned whether we should look to ballot holders to fund raupo control in wetlands such as Kaituna. This led to discussion over the lack of work being undertaken by some ballot holders, methods to make better use of volunteers, the tenure for ballots being too short, and health and safety concerns for volunteers and a recently obtained legal opinion relating to this. Andy Garrick suggested we should raise this as a specific agenda item for more detailed discussion at a meeting of Council later in the year.
- Andy noted that approaches to staff indicate there is considerable potential for encouraging or facilitating development of wetlands on private land by groups of hunters entering into agreements with landowners. Legal opinion obtained previously suggests this can be interpreted as the selling of hunting rights which is specifically prohibited by the Wildlife Act. Andy suggested there is merit in seeking further advice in relation to this and determining if there are ways in which this could be set up so we don't contravene the legislation or the intention behind it.

9.5 *Water Quality and Quantity*

- Cr Lindsay Lyons spoke about the degradation of water quality in the Rangitaiki River commenting that the Otamatea was once a crystal clear 'blue ribbon' river

and now drift dives were reporting visibility of less than a metre. Andy Garrick commented on staff's involvement in Rangitaiki River forum, that we were providing the Bay of Plenty Regional Council with our observations, and confirmed that we would be exerting greater pressure on the Regional Council to investigate the causes of what appeared to be an ongoing decline, and take decisive action on the results of these investigations.

- Cr Murray Ferris queried Eben Herbert on progress with the Gisborne District Plan and water quality. Eben advised that the planning process was well underway with hearings having been held in the latter half of last year. He said that while there had been no findings released yet, a number of issues had been identified and the Council was endeavouring to determine what it could do to resolve these. Cr Sandy Bull noted that the Motu had been in trouble for some years.
- Cr Barry Roderick queried whether Fish & Game collects samples for testing for coliforms and faecal content when we drift dive these rivers. Andy Garrick advised that only visibility/turbidity and dissolved oxygen were measured currently, but noted that this is something that should be looked into for the health and safety of staff. Cr Barry Roderick suggested that Fish & Game should pick up on the swimmable waters campaign because if they are swimmable they will be good for fish.
- Eben Herbert said that the Gisborne District Council was well aware of its water issues but unfortunately this is a slow process made slower with little money. He advised that one issue which the Eastern Fish and Game Council will need some external input to, will be around emergency crop provisions which would allow allocation of water below minimum flows. Discussion followed on allowing increased cropping when water supply cannot maintain existing operations, land being utilised for purposes it's not fit for, and issues around how and when irrigation is undertaken and wastage arising from this. Eben advised that the focus would not be so much on restriction of land use but restrictions on crop type and timing to improve efficiency. Andy Garrick advised that we wished to flag this to Council as an application to the legal fund may be required. Cr Steve Scragg queried whether Council needed to approve this now? Eben advised that this was a very specific issue and not likely to be an expensive exercise, and we should wait until decisions had come out to determine whether it remains an issue.

9.6 *Angler and hunter access*

- Cr Lindsay Lyons spoke of the New Zealand Council's work with the Walking Access Commission and the need to continue to forward any issues through to them. He suggested that the Commission could be working more closely with regional councils and commented on the great work that had been completed on the WAM's maps.
- Cr Barry Roderick asked Council to consider a new summer fishery, querying whether Fish & Game could open up other parts of the Rangitaiki or Whirinaki rivers? Cr David Woolner supported this suggestion and an ongoing commitment to open up new access. Andy Garrick advised that there was some room to move in this area with the existing resourcing we had for access, and commented on recent work completed in the Wairoa catchment through the Waikaremoana fund. He noted there were also opportunities on the East Coast that staff would like to explore north of Gisborne.

9.7 *Maximising fishery opportunities*

- Cr Lindsay Lyons queried whether we should consider promoting our coarse fisheries noting the opportunities present in the Auckland/Waikato region and suggesting that this could be another way to increase this region's licence sales.
- John Meikle asked Council to consider simplifying the region's fishing regulations as he felt that this was a significant barrier to participation, noting that the changes to the upper Uthina regulations had allowed more opportunities for kids, and had reduced input from staff having to deal with kids and related compliance issues. Council agreed that while regular anglers were not too concerned with the current regulations there was a need to simplify regulations to attract new participants and make it easier for anglers visiting from other areas. Andy Garrick advised that as the Anglers Notice was not due to be formally reviewed again until 2018 it might be useful to initiate a more 'relaxed' review of the regulations ahead of then, the objective being to focus on if or how we could remove some of the complexity that applies to some of the region's fisheries. Cr Steve Scragg suggested that it may be appropriate to break the review down into parts and have a series of sessions in which Council does this, e.g. have it as an ongoing agenda item for Council meetings.
- Cr Barry Roderick requested that consideration be given to identifying sensitive back country waters and the process for utilising the Back Country dedicated reserve into which the additional non-resident licence revenue was being deposited. He also requested confirmation that work would continue on investigating issues associated with the Lake Tarawera Fishery. Andy Garrick advised that staff were currently in the process of developing a research programme with other parties that we'd be seeking funding for from both within and outside Fish & Game. Andy indicated that we would be pulling back on work at Lake Waikaremoana going into the 2017-18 year, and that this would enable staff to increase harvest and satisfaction monitoring on some of the smaller lakes in the region such as Rotoma, Rotoehu, Okareka and Rerewhakaaitu, and potentially, to expand our drift diving programme to some of the region's fisheries that have not been surveyed for many years.

10.0 **ENGAGING WITH LICENCE HOLDERS AND THE PUBLIC**

- 10.1 Don Rood, Fish and Game's National Communications Manager provided Council with a presentation on communications, and highlighted Fish & Game as being the most powerful environmental organisation in the country. He spoke about the organisation's strengths through its highly qualified staff and dedicated councils, challenges facing the organisation, and about promotions such as the Game Bird Festival and Fish for Gold. He said that the Communications group was always looking for new ideas for doing it better and invited this Council to provide input. Council went on to discuss ideas.

11.0 **COUNCIL EVALUATION**

- 11.1 Cr Lindsay Lyons informed Council that the New Zealand Council undertakes an evaluation of its performance each year, and as this is set out as a requirement for this Council in its Governance Policy, suggested that it would be appropriate to get this underway. Council supported this, and Andy Garrick advised that forms would be

emailed to Councillors for completion and discussion at Council's next meeting in April.

11.2 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Steve Scragg) that Council should undertake its evaluation and that this be completed in time for the next meeting. [17/02/11.2]*

12.0 VENUE FOR AUGUST AND OCTOBER 2017 MEETINGS

12.1 Council considered venues for the August and October meetings and agreed that it would be appropriate to meet in Tauranga for the October meeting of Council. Cr Sandy Bull relayed the Gisborne and Wairoa clubs desire to hold another meeting in those areas in the future.

12.3 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Steve Scragg) that the October meeting of Council will take place in Tauranga with the August meeting confirmed for Rotorua. [17/02/12.3]*

13.0 SPECIES MONITORING REPORTS

13.1 *Agreed (Laurance Tamati/Sandy Bull) that Council receive the Rotorua Lakes 2016 Winter Creel Survey Report. [17/02/13.1]*

14.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

14.1 Reports from other agencies

Department of Conservation - Central North Island Region

Michel Dedual advised that the Taupo fishery has continued to improve with some of the best fishing that they have seen in ten years. He said that they too were looking at amendments to licence categories to provide more options and spoke of the introduction of an Anglers Notice for the fishery. He said that two of the proposed regulation changes this year were a reduction in the minimum legal size and an increase in the daily bag limit.

14.2 Report from the New Zealand Council

Lindsay Lyons advised that the New Zealand Council was yet to meet this year and therefore he had little to report at this stage. He was able to update Council on the announcement by Bryce Johnson that his expected departure date would be 20 October 2017, and that the NZ Council was in the process of developing a job description and procedure for appointing a new Chief Executive.

15.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

15.1 Kate Thompson provided an overview of the Licence Sales summary report for the 2015-16 Season which was included in the February Papers for Information. She outlined the position at year end, and highlighted the significant shift to the local area licence for this region, noting however that in the current season it appears there may be a shift back to whole season categories.

15.2 *Agreed (Steve Scragg/Laurance Tamati) that the payments for November and December 2016 totalling \$408,263.16 be approved, and that Council receives the Health and Safety report, Management report, and Licence Sales report. [17/02/15.2]*

16.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

16.1 Cr Alan Baird queried whether this Council had considered 'waterfowl preserves' and whether this could be discussed at a future meeting. Andy Garrick advised that the situation regarding captive reared mallards was currently being looked at nationally

with a view to establishing national policy, and that he could request that the concept of waterfowl preserve hunting be added to that agenda. Alan queried the time frame for this and Andy advised he was not aware at this stage of when the NZ Council would be looking at it, but was aware that an independent review of the pros and cons of releasing captive reared mallards was being contemplated to underpin the discussion. He doubted that it would be included on the NZ Council's March agenda but noted the considerable interest from other regions in advancing the discussion, Hawke's Bay in particular, and suggested it more likely it would be the NZ Council's May meeting after managers had considered it at their end of April meeting. Andy noted that a preliminary discussion of captive reared mallard releases was also on the agenda of the upcoming managers meeting next week.

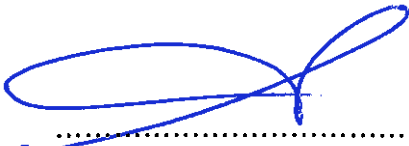
16.2 The second item proposed for discussion (display of museum) items was withdrawn due to time concerns on the understanding that there was no urgency to consider it now and it could be addressed at a future meeting.

17.0 PRESENTATION TO NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL CHAIRS

17.1 The meeting ended with Don Rood inviting Sandy Lawrie, one of five former NZ Council Chairman, and Lindsay Lyons, current Chairman of the NZ Council, to accept a framed photo of all NZ Council chairs taken last year. Sandy was elected to the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council in 1990 and was Chair of the NZ Council for six years. Sandy and Lindsay briefly spoke of past experiences and the challenges of the role, and Lindsay noted how well the current Council was working and the promise this held for the future.

18.0 MEETING CLOSED

18.1 The meeting was closed at 3.08pm.


.....
Murray Ferris,
Chairman

6/4/17
.....
Date

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

2.0 APOLOGIES

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