

## WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 4 APRIL 2017 AT 3.05PM AT COACHMAN HOTEL, 140 FITZHERBERT AVE, PALMERSTON NORTH

1. **Present:**  
Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Jim Cook, Paul Shortis, Andy Tannock, Chris O'Meara, Andrew Morris, Don Scott, Dan Waechter, Malcolm Francis.
2. **In Attendance:**  
Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Hamish Carnachan, Peter Wilson  
  
Jim Rainey (Wellington Conservation Board), Roger Smailes (Licenceholder)
3. **Apologies:**  
Councillors Eric Neumann, Simon Muckley Brad Johnson, Marc Flaws

**It was then moved that:**  
***the apologies be accepted.***

**Malcolm Francis/Jim Cook**  
Carried

4. **Conflicts of Interest**  
A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of Interest. No new conflicts of interest were declared.
5. **Minutes of Previous Meeting of 14 February 2017**  
After a brief discussion it was moved that:  
***the Minutes of the Meeting of Wellington Fish & Game Council of 14 February 2017 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.***  
**Malcom Francis/Dan Waechter**  
Carried
6. **Matters Arising**  
Chairman Cotsilinis noted that the letter from Wellington Fish & Game Council dated 7 December 2017 had been tabled at the March 2017 NZ Fish & Game Council expressing Council's views on the way the issue of considering reviewing continued use of lead shot in sub-12gauge ammunition for waterfowl hunting had been concluded. It was understood the letter was

noted as being received but no further discussion resulted from it at the NZ Council meeting.

7. **Minutes of Previous In-Committee Meeting of 14 February 2017**

After a brief discussion it was moved that:

***the In-Committee Minutes of the Meeting of Wellington Fish & Game Council of 14 February 2017 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.***

**Dan Waechter/Andrew Morris**

Carried

8. **NZ Council Business**

Councillor Morris provided an update from the NZ Council meeting held on 24-26 March 2017. He indicated that he was only present for the Friday 24 March 2017 portion of the meeting.

Councillor Morris had noted that NZ Council had reviewed their governance policies recently and recommended that all regions do likewise. Wellington Council was aware of that and would undertake the first discussions of governance policies at the August Council meeting. Councillor Morris noted that the Office of Auditor General may visit various regional Fish & Game Councils to monitor effectiveness of governance policies.

Councillor Morris noted that NZ Councillor Matthew Hall had progressed aspects of the organisational financial review including bequests/donations, and also was looking at getting details of the internal and external costs of children's fishing programmes.

Councillor Morris noted that North Canterbury Fish & Game Council were afforded an opportunity to present information supporting continued resourcing of their trout/salmon hatchery. They also sought to fund works on their new office facilities in addition to the existing earthquake settlement funds (funding this out of reserves). NZ Council directed North Canterbury Fish & Game Council to present the funding application via the Fish & Game Managers as is usual budgeting process.

It was moved that:

***the report of part of the Meeting of NZ Fish & Game Council of 24-26 March 2017 from Councillor Morris be received.***

**Chris O'Meara/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

**9. Public Participation**

Chairman Cotsilinis invited members of the public to speak on any particular issues. No issues were forthcoming.

**10. Health & Safety Update**

Mr Teal noted that there had been some development of health and safety reporting sheets which prioritised attention based on highest risk and how to mitigate such. He confirmed that staff were filing an intentions and reporting protocol, and that he had expressed interest in a smartphone App being developed in Nelson Marlborough region to help undertake a similar purpose.

Mr Teal noted that the potential work programme to assess consistency of approach to Health and Safety planning and implementation amongst regions with ACC and Worksafe would be undertaken in lieu of a formal peer review of OSH Manual templates used internally within Fish & Game.

Chairman Cotsilinis reinforced the need for Council to commit to supporting and resourcing health and safety adequately – noting a recent potential incident at the children’s fish out pond that was averted due to prudent health and safety practices.

**11. Strategic Planning Discussion**

Council undertook a broad discussion of key issues in the region with the potential to re-prioritise projects and consider new priorities that may have arisen. The summary notes from the strategic discussion undertaken on 5 April 2016 Council provided a basis for review.

Councillor Dan Waechter noted the potential for further development of the Wainuiomata recreational dam to create fishing opportunities and other recreational opportunities. Views were expressed on the other Wellington reservoir opportunities that have not materialised at Te Marua and Karori, and the highlighted the need to get agreements for use in writing.

Councillor Scott noted that access continues to be an important issue for hunting (Pencarrow lakes, Baring Head, and Otaki River) but also for areas for anglers such as Bluff Road, near Woodville.

Councillor Morris noted the importance of allocating enough resources to Fish & Game wetlands such as Yules Lagoon and Simmonds Lagoon where options discussed included willow clearance and creating defined depressions in the bed of the wetland. It was suggested that a planned approach be undertaken using a defined action plan and allocating a

reasonable amount of resources (~\$5,000-\$10,000) per year would see progress and momentum in achieving goals.

Councillor Scott considered that fishing and education opportunities should be pursued that aligns with the project planned at the Palmerston North Esplanade by the Palmerston North City Council in conjunction with other funders. Councillor Francis considered that Fish & Game Council should look at this as an opportunity to positively influence changes in thinking and then consider it a long term investment as a community asset. Chairman Cotsilinis noted that once an asset is established it must be maintained and managed. Councillor Scott outlined the potential physical requirements of a managed pond – with potential sites (including LINZ land upstream) and water supply from ram pumps from the river. Councillor Shortis considered the prioritising the resourcing when time was right in the overall development phase. Chairman Cotsilinis considered there needed to be a more formal agreement with Palmerston North City Council should significant resources be allocated beyond feasibility. It was considered that some governors (Chairman Cotsilinis and Councillor Scott) and staff should seek to formalise any interest from the Palmerston North City Council.

Councillor Waechter discussed research requirements such as the potential river functions and flood control works in the hyporheic zone with Mr Wilson indicating this could be mentioned in the Greater Wellington Regional Council Flood Protection resource consent applications for them to consider as part of their work programme.

Councillor Shortis considered that there needed to be a marketing plan developed which is also well resourced – considering the previous fishing season licence sales indicating more participants but less income due largely to the new licence category options.

Councillor Tannock noted that for predator trapping and control there is a need to provide practical advice, undertaking proactive activities to influence public perception, Fish & Game to lead by example, and inspire hunters and landholders to undertake control on private land. He considered it was not just encouraging hunters to be proactive but also show to agencies, such as the Department of Conservation and others, that hunters can take the initiative in positive conservation. There was general support for Council to allocate resources to predator control initiatives and discussion of options available including: which traps, types of predators targeted, potentially subsidizing traps, co-ordinating traps distribution, target using a suite of traps, contacts within existing initiatives such as Waterfowl Enhancement

Trust. This was indentified as a potential contestable funded project by Fish & Game using a pure research trial at a Fish & Game site and then expand.

Discussion ensued on planning requirements for maimais including District Plans and Building Act.

**12. 2017/18 Draft Annual Budget and Plan**

The Draft budget was considered with a view to defining if any contestable fund applications need to be identified for the wider budgeting process.

It was agreed that following the discussion on predator control opportunities that resources for contestable funding be in the order of \$10,000 including provision for a trapping programme on Fish & Game land or other suitable site.

It was agreed that the Fish in Schools programme would be elevated but not to the extent of an extra half FTE staffing resources. Mr Carnahan considered there would be advantages in investigating options for Palmerston North Esplanade first to achieve longer term leverage opportunities. It was further discussed to progress the project there would be a feasibility assessment phase to determine what would be required (resource consents, landscape plans); and then what would be required to ensure sustainable development. It would be envisaged that up to \$25,000 be applied for a contestable fund for next financial year and if required funds applied in subsequent years.

It was moved that

***A contestable fund application be made for 2017/18 Financial Year for:  
(1) up to \$25,000 for project management of feasibility assessment for establishing a fish out pond at Palmerston North Esplanade – including assessments of Resource Management requirements and landscape plans;***

***(2) up to \$10,000 for a predator trapping programme to provide leverage for promoting wider hunter involvement in predator control,***

**Malcolm Francis/Chris O'Meara**

Carried

The staff resources set aside for dealing with Council Elections would be redistributed to other projects, and amended accordingly in the budget.

It was then moved that

***The draft budget for the Annual Plan 2017/18 Financial Year be sent to NZ Council budget setting processes.***

**Jim Cook/Andrew Morris**

Carried

**13. Bait Fishing, Catch and Release, and Competition Fishing – Discussion Paper**

Councillor Scott outlined the issues raised in a discussion paper highlighting some of the scientific literature surrounding the topics.

Catch & Release:

- Paucity of information in UK and New Zealand;
- Some species are more prone to mortality from catch and release;
- Major factors resulting in mortality including angling duration (lactic acid production);
- Duration to exposure to amount air is critical;
- Water temperature is very important - 17°C - for oxygen uptake and lactic acid production;
- Treble hooks only marginally more important ;
- Angling period can have influence – e.g. immediately prior to or post spawning.
- Baited hooks can have up to 74% mortality (Giles literature review of trout mortality rates from catch and release)

Councillor Scott provided further discussion of the issues on how to further address any perceived issues:

- Didn't think catch and release practice overall was detrimental to the fisheries overall and doesn't detract from the quality of fishing;
- Ethical treatment – does it harm the fish unnecessarily?
- Considered an education programme based on an information sheet using information from the scientific papers – an action for NZ Council.

Councillor Francis commended Councillor Scott for his contribution in providing supporting papers. He reiterated the need for raised awareness by NZ Council in angling clubs and for the general angler – using increased education resources such as information sheets and magazine inserts promoting best practice protocols for handling of fish and how to photograph fish.

After further discussion it was moved that

***NZ Fish & Game Council be encouraged to develop protocols for catch and release in information sheets and insert into public awareness material***

**Dan Waechter/Don Scott**

Carried

#### Competition Fishing:

Chairman Cotsilinis confirmed the competition fishing was accepted and provided for under the Conservation Act and must conform to local Fish & Game regulations and requires regional Fish & Game approval. It was acknowledged that there were no criteria as to assess whether to approve any applications – other than on sustainability grounds.

Councillor Scott confirmed that he did not have concerns if the established formal competition rules defined by SFFNZ are followed but may have concerns if these competition rules are not adhered to. He considered that there could be some direction given to direct competitions in the regulations - even if based on the SFFNZ and/or internationally accepted practices. Chairman Cotsilinis considered that this could be progressed by Wellington Fish & Game by developing a standard policy on how to deal with competition authorisation and operation and potentially incorporated into the Sports Fish & Game Management Plan.

#### Baited Hooks:

Councillor Scott summarised the scientific papers that noted higher mortality generally occurred for trout using baited hooks, and potentially had implications for coarse fishing. Councillor Scott didn't consider that an overall ban was appropriate as young anglers often started their involvement in fishing using this method. It did reinforce the conditions that Wellington Fish & Game Council use for catch and release for trout over a certain size limit (upper slot limit).

#### **14. Western Greater Wellington River Management - Update**

Mr Wilson confirmed that he would develop a template submission for the resource consent applications for the global consent GWRC (Flood Protection) which covered the Hutt, Wainuiomata, Otaki, and Waikanae rivers. Mr Wilson considered that it was important to get conditions included that require independent monitoring where there is an actual need identified. Discussion ensued on the important issues already identified such as: 800m limit on in-river works per year, and aggregations in Waikanae River particularly in the lower reaches. Mr Wilson noted he would make time available for angling clubs (Wellington Fly Fishing Club, Kapiti Angling Club, Hutt Valley Angling Club, and Horowhenua Freshwater Angling Club) if required, either one-on-one discussions or attend club meetings to ensure effective submissions were developed by due date in mid April.

General discussion ensued on each of the rivers with specific comments made on:

- *Waikanae and Otaki rivers* gravel extraction (direct channel management);
- *Waikanae River* below old State Highway One, ensuring downstream movement of gravel at the weir (water intake);
- *Willow management issues* – potential excessive cutting/removal of trees.

Mr Teal noted that the Code of Practice was an important management tool that would require peer review to ensure activities covered by the document were suitable in maintaining desirable environmental outcomes.

**15. One Plan Implementation Case - Update**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the decision of the Environment Court which was released on 3 April 2017. Discussion ensued on the potential implications of decisions/judicial declarations made and course of actions available to Horizons Regional Council and Fish & Game NZ.

Mr Wilson explained that part of the RMA was not clear – and the Declaration by the Environment Court agreed with the interpretation by EDS and Fish & Game – and deemed that the consents were determined in an unlawful way. He considered that the judgment clearly articulated that the Regional Plan should be implemented as the Plan states – which is a clear precedent. The decision means that Horizons Regional Council can not chose to implement or not to implement certain aspects, or they may undertake a Plan change, or go to the High Court to challenge the Environment Court’s decision. Questions also arise as to how the Regional Council will deal with consents already issued and how they could be reviewed. Mr Wilson also considered that wider Fish & Game must keep putting resources and effort into regional plan planning – considering that they must now be implemented.

Councillor Francis considered that now there is a clear decision from the Environment Court that Fish & Game work with the Regional Council and other parties to make it work – as we want the One Plan implemented as agreed and intended. Councillor Shortis noted that while licenceholders have been pleased that the case has clarified the implementation issues, it shouldn’t cost Fish & Game significant resources moving forward. It was agreed that after costs are determined and/or awarded that a conciliatory approach be considered.

Mr Jim Rainey left the meeting at 5.40pm.



**16. Wairarapa Water Update**

The Council agreed *to move into Public Excluded session (at 5.40pm)*

**Andrew Morris/Dan Waechter**

Carried

*That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting namely the agenda items:*

*Wairarapa Water Project*

*The withholding of information is necessary to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by councillors or officers and to maintain legal professional privilege and potentially commercially sensitive information.*

*This resolution is made in reliance on section 48(1)(a)(II) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest or interests protected by section 9 of the Official Information Act 1982 which would be prejudiced by the holding of the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public*

*Wellington F&GC move out of committee (at 5.50pm) and that the public be invited to return to the meeting.*

**Dan Waechter/Chris O'Meara**

Carried

**17. Lake Wairarapa Moana Update**

Mr Teal gave an overview of the actions by DoC to stop vehicle access to Boggy Pond/Matthews Lagoon and Wairio Wetland – with it agreed that it be clarified that access to the lake via Molly Dyke access-way be maintained as several hunting groups used it for access.

The river and lake levels have been high and a review was requested of how the lake levels were managed (especially minimum levels up until opening weekend) and how the barrage gates were operated with respect to their resource consents.

**18. Mallard Research Project**

Mr Teal noted that Southland Fish & Game researcher Erin Garrick had published a paper on the research – which would be forwarded once it became available.

**19. Junior Angler Participation – Fish in Schools**

Mr Carnachan gave a brief overview of project that the ova from Ngongotaha hatchery would be available in May or early June. There was at least one tank available for allocation - with schools being considered: Mangaroa, Brooklyn, Levin, Paraparaumu, Stokes Valley. A promotion overview in the form of an email was requested to be developed for future use.

The sub-committee met after the February Council meeting and discussed sustainability of the project and potential expansion.

**20. Recognition of Contributions**

Mr Teal confirmed that an order of Fish & Game medals had been made as the preferred option to recognise contribution of volunteer and service providers - 100 Fish & Game medals that have the Fish & Game logo on the front and Fish and Game's legislative purpose included on the outer circle – and that the other side of the medal remain blank for personalised engraving.

It was agreed that honorary rangers who had contributed their time over an extended period (over five years) be considered for recognition medals.

**21. Wetlands in Rural Landscape – Proposal Paper**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the purpose of the proposal to gain funding from the Ministry for the Environment Freshwater Improvement Fund (Clean Up Fund v.2.0) to achieve the overall goal, actions to involve education of the benefits of wetlands in landscapes, provision of technically sound practical advice on how to undertake actions to restore wetlands, use of reference wetlands within properties and drainage schemes, and providing subsidy for work undertaken on private and public land for restoring wetlands. It was developed for a funding bid via the Manawatu River Accord but Mr Teal expressed concerns that Horizons Regional Council may act as a gatekeeper for funding proposals and focus on previously successful application involving District Council wastewater treatment upgrades and subsidies for fencing farmland.

**22. Angler Access – Ruamahanga River Update**

Mr Carnachan and Chairman Cotsilinis gave an overview of the situation regarding access at the confluence of the Waiohine and Ruamahanga rivers by the gliding club – with clarification being sought from the District Council on what options are available to ensure practical access for anglers. South Wairarapa DC CEO had indicated that he would prefer that Fish & Game fund an alternative route around the airfield but would want this available to increase all public access rather than anglers only. If options to progress

resolving the issue are not forthcoming, it was agreed that a letter from Chairman to Mayor be considered.

**23. Management Report 1 February – 31 March 2017**

Mr Teal noted that Mr Canning had undertaken some mathematical modelling which sought to specify what was required in terms of nitrogen leaching to achieve ecosystem health in rivers in the Ruamahanga catchment. The initial analyses indicated that it would be difficult to achieve stated goals in the Proposed Plan without significantly changing land use – especially in a short term timeframe. Discussion ensued on projections for reducing nitrogen leaching using different feeds - as one of the several mitigation measures available. Further discussion ensued on improvement over time – including the longer term 50+ years as a potential pragmatic option to consider.

***The meeting adjourned for dinner at 6.15pm and was reconvened 7.15pm.***

The project involving microchemistry analysis for the Ruamahanga, Hutt, and Rangitikei catchments is running behind schedule with Cawthron Institute still analysing the modelling that resulted from the initial analysis.

The resource consent applications have been notified for the Western Rivers global consents for Greater Wellington Regional Council flood protection but the submission period has been extended due to perceptions of poor consultation with local iwi. An approach to have the Code of Practice peer reviewed has been canvassed with GWRC Flood Protection unit.

There are two resource consent processes coming to hearing stage at the Taraura District Council Waste Water Treatment Plants at Ekatahuna and Pahiatua. The former site adds nitrogen to the Makakahi River and the latter adds a pulse of phosphorus to the Mangatainoka.

Mr Teal met with a marketing consultant to provide advice to the Licence Working Party on how to define and resource a marketing strategy.

Mr Teal gave an overview of the environmental DNA programme and it was agreed that the proposals for research would be forwarded through the Fish & Game research programme.

After discussion it was moved that

***The management report for 1 February – 31 March 2017 be received.***

**Don Scott/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

**24. Fish & Game Licence Sales**

Mr Teal gave overview of the licence sales for fish were approximately 9% down on previous year's sales at the same period, and there were several reasons postulated included inclement weather conditions causing a delay in purchase or no purchase.

After further discussion it was moved

***The Fish Licence Sales report as at 15 March 2017 be received***

**Malcolm Francis/Jim Cook**

Carried

Discussion ensued on the merits of the new licence categories and their effectiveness for Fish & Game's sustainable revenue base. It was then moved that

***Wellington Fish & Game Council request NZ Fish & Game Council to start collecting information now on licence category effectiveness for fish licence sales to enable the organisation to be in a position to review licence categories sales in a systematic, objective, and timely manner to enable a rationalisation of licence categories (and/or pricing options) if required so it can be implemented in the 2018/19 fishing season.***

**Andy Tannock/Chris O'Meara**

Carried

Consideration was given to the report entitled *Licence Sales YTD and Licence Analysis* prepared by Robert Sowman (Planning and Policy Manager, NZ Fish & Game Council) undated but prepared for the March 2017 NZ Council meeting.

A request was made for regional input and views on the following issues:

- 1. Imposing a limit on the consecutive days a licence holder can be issued, with the proposed limit be for three days, and not renewable for a further five working days.***

It was considered to be too complicated and also noted as being potentially problematic at licence agent/retailer level. If the purpose was to address an issue with Non-resident anglers purchasing consecutive daily licences instead of a Non-resident season licence then consider a 30% premium surcharge on non-resident daily licences (in all categories).

**2. *Broadening the designated fishery areas in keeping with the back country definition as useful management tool in the promotion of more whole season (including non-resident) licences.***

It appears that the concept has a tourism focus and appears to be complicated to implement and too hard for compliance. It was agreed that the categories needed to be simplified not made more complicated in interpretation. Discussion also ensued on what issue was being addressed - and if it was an issue with one day fishing licences on selected lakes then identify that category on a select group of lakes. Council did not support the concept as it was principally not protecting the resource but focussed as a revenue gathering generator.

The value of the day licence was discussed as fitting the requirements of the casual and impulse fisherman, and also suited young anglers with poor cash flow.

**3. *Permitting all named people on the family licence to fish alone on the licence.***

After discussion Council agreed with this – but also considered review of the price of the family licence if this was likely to result in lost adult wholeseason licence sales.

**4. *Premium Licence – naming of the wholeseason licence***

Discussion ensued on the “premium” licence – and it was agreed if introduced then remove the regional licence option. The use of the term ‘premium’ doesn’t indicate the season length or wide use of the licence (anywhere in NZ). Options such as Premium with explanation - Premium Adult NZ Wide Season Licence.

**5. *Participation – Strategy for Co-ordination:***

Discussion ensued on how to generate additional participation – involving initiatives at schools and introduction to novices, and subsidising retired people to give angling a go.

For retailers – there seems to be opportunities to develop relationships with new anglers – and add value to ensure success in the pursuit yet there appears to be a clear drive to drive grass roots points of contact to on-line licence purchase options.

Discussion continued on tuition available to “getting things started” – lacking a recruitment and retention structure that links individuals to

clubs and retailers. A retail marketing strategy would assist such in developing and forging partnerships.

**25. Expenditure Report**

Mr Teal noted that the expenditure for RMA legal cases would be separated out to provide clarity on budget progress and comparisons for variance reporting.

After discussion it was moved that

***the Expenditure Report for 28 February 2017 and Financial Transactions for January and February 2017 be approved***

**Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

**26. Correspondence and Media**

After further discussion it was moved to

***Correspondence and Media reports for February and March 2017 be received***

**Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

**27. General Business**

Following a request from Councillor Scott , it was agreed to distribute the latest information on 1080 and potential impacts on trout.

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, Tuesday 6 June 2017 at 3.00pm.

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