

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF

If you require further elaboration or clarification of items contained herein, or any other matters relating to F&GC business, please don't hesitate to contact your local ward councillor or the office.

1. Mr Klee updated Councillors on the Lake Waikare/Whangamarino appeal, noting that ICM will be doing a Section 127 application under the RMA to manipulate the Te Onetea gate to try and achieve the suspended sediment reduction in the discharge from Lake Waikare to the Whangamarino Wetland, and if that doesn't work there is an obligation to look at other measures.
2. Brief discussion on the current high RMA workload which was partly due to the consent renewals for the Waikato Fonterra dairy factories. It was noted that F&G will soon be submitting on the Te Rapa discharge consent.
3. Councillor Annan complemented Dr Daniel on the high standard of his recent presentation to the Te Awamutu F&G club.
4. Councillor S. Smith expressed his disagreement with the statements made to staff by a "concerned hunter" that the Flax Block water levels were on par with the lowest he had ever seen them at this time of year. Councillor Smith noted that water levels in the block at markup and opening weekend were more than adequate and were far higher than during the drought year of about 4 years ago. The weir boards were currently set at 1.7m. He suggested that staff contact the concerned hunter and ask him to contact the Flax Block hunter association to discuss further. Councillor Smith was concerned about incorrect information circulating amongst the hunter community.
5. The Report "Marketing Analysis" prepared by Steve Doughty was discussed. Councillors agreed that the number of hunters and anglers in the Auckland/Waikato region was constrained by resource limitations and thus there was little potential to increase licence sales despite an increasing population. Councillors agreed that individual Fish & Game regions should be responsible for their own promotions and marketing.
6. Councillors supported the recommendation of the NZF&GC that an adult whole season sports fish licence fee of \$130 and an adult whole season game licence fee of \$96 be accepted.
7. Councillors agreed that the number of licence categories should be reviewed by the licence committee with the objective of reducing the number of categories.
8. Councillor Juby suggested that the possibility of police accompanying rangers on opening weekend should be considered as occurred in several other F&G regions.
9. Councillor Sherrard thanked Mr Klee for his efforts in restoring wetlands in the Opuatia area.
10. Councillor S. Smith expressed his disappointment that the regulations booklet was often not distributed by licence agents when issuing game licences. Discussion ensued of whether the booklet should be mailed to licence holders but Mr Wilson emphasised that a high proportion of game licences were sold by agencies in the last week of the game season. It was agreed that the pre-season game newsletter should have a section summarising the game regulations including season dates.
11. Mr Tyson informed the meeting of his concern over political pressure from groups such as SAFE to restrict the right to use firearms and hunt to individuals over the age of 18 years. Councillor Carey stated that this policy had recently been introduced in Poland.
12. Councillor Juby asked whether staff had access to disinfecting equipment for visiting farms due to the M. bovic outbreak. Mr Wilson agreed that such equipment was essential.

Matters Arising From Chief Executive's Report

2018 Game Season: Many hunters reported that this has been the best season for decades if not ever. Some areas remain a concern with many reports from the lower Waikato River indicating continued poor numbers, although the feedback staff are getting about this area has been mixed, with other parties ecstatic with their opening weekend harvest. Similarly, reports from Hamilton south and in the King Country have been patchy. The swamps appear to be shooting spectacularly especially in the 3rd week of the season with rising water and weather.

Lake Pupuke: Adam Daniel released trout, including Brook Trout, at the annual Lake Pupuke fish release. The event was well attended and sponsored by Pure Fishing NZ. Fish were also released at Lake Moananui.

Healthy Rivers (PC 1): We made a submission on the withdrawn portion of PC 1 (now re-notified as 'Variation 1'). The focus of this submission was to ensure that the Whangamarino Wetland is appropriately managed.

We have also sent a letter to the WRC requesting that the consent application by Wairakei Estate Limited to 'lock in' Nitrogen discharges until 2030 in the upper catchment of the Waikato River be processed with public notification, and we set out the reasons why this is necessary.

Waipa District Council Te Awamutu Wastewater consent applications: We were pleased that the applicants responded to almost all points in our submission, the only remaining issue being that the Nitrogen load proposed does not include reductions sufficient to justify a 35 year term.

Fonterra Consent applications: These include Te Awamutu, Te Rapa, and Hautapu all of which are at different, early, stages of their application process. We have submitted on the Te Awamutu application, the Te Rapa application is soon to be lodged and the Hautapu application (for a discharge to land and water) is in consultation state.

Crusader meats/JF Ramsey discharge to land consent: We expect that the applicant will make amended proposals after consultation with another submitter. The Horizons Regional Council has indicated that the applicant will ensure biological monitoring conditions are included in the proposed consent, as we requested in our submission.

Waikare/Whangamarino Catchment Management Plan: David Klee attended the meetings aimed at setting the objectives of the CMP. A large number of parties attended including different sectors of the farming community.

Long term Plans: We presented at the Waikato Regional Council long term plan hearing on several issues (pest management, increasing funding for catchment restoration works, Tauhei flood control scheme, consent fees for small dams).

Waikato District Plan review: The Waikato District Plan is currently in the process of being reviewed. Mischa Davis gave feedback on the draft version of the plan in January.

Aka Aka Wetland: The hunters in this area banded together with F&G funding support to repair the wooden bridges there to make them safe for both limited quad and more particularly human access. This was to replace untreated wood that had rotted out since last year's repairs.

Maimai Disputes: Staff have assisted hunters with maimai disputes. There are a few things that contribute to these, such as hunters who mark-up but don't actually shoot their locations opening weekend. Some other hunters take this as an invitation to mark it up themselves believing this gives them the right to. A careful reading of the law often sorts things out eventually.