

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 27 MARCH 2018 AT 3.00PM AT UPPER HUTT COSMOPOLITAN CLUB, 11 LOGAN STREET, UPPER HUTT.

1. **Present:**
Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Jim Cook, Paul Shortis, Chris O'Meara, Dan Waechter, Malcolm Francis, Marc Flaws, Don Scott, Andrew Morris, Simon Muckley, Brad Johnson.

2. **In Attendance:**
Staff: Phil Teal (Manager)
Public: Martin Taylor (Chief Executive, NZ Fish & Game Council)

3. **Apologies:**
Councillors Eric Neumann, Andy Tannock.

Staff: Matt Kavermann, Hamish Carnachan, Adam Canning, Peter Wilson.

It was then moved that:

the apologies be accepted.

Chris O'Meara/Dan Waechter

Carried

The Chairman welcomed the Martin Taylor, Chief Executive of NZ Fish & Game Council to the meeting and invited comment where appropriate.

It was agreed by Council to contact Councillor Neumann to confirm his move to Dunedin and his interest and willingness to continue contributions to Wellington Fish & Game Council and/or review his status as a co-opted member on Council.

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 13 February 2018**
After a brief discussion it was moved that:
the Minutes of the Meeting of Wellington Fish & Game Council of 13 February 2018 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Jim Cook/Dan Waechter

Carried

6. Matters Arising

Mr Teal confirmed that recommendations for the game season conditions for the 2018 Game Season had been sent to the Minister of Conservation via NZ Fish & Game Council.

Mr Teal confirmed that Wellington Fish & Game Council's submission on captive reared mallards had been sent to NZ Fish & Game Council as part of the wider regional consultation.

Mr Teal confirmed that a permit had been extended to sample additional sites for a PhD student working in the Wairarapa, Wellington, and Kapiti sites.

Councillors confirmed their recent experiences on the variability of checks on the Interisland Ferry inspections for didymo checks.

7. NZ Council Business

Councillor Morris gave an overview of the meeting held on 16 and 17 March 2018 in Greymouth. He updated Council that NZ Council had split the Water Conservation Order application for Ngaruroro into the upper section and lower section due to the differences of outstanding values and requirements to improve each section. While still committed to the project, there is currently an opportunity to review options in front of the tribunal hearing submissions.

Councillor Morris noted that NZ Council had further considered options for progressing a guides licence, with issues on tax status and statutory responsibilities of foreign guides being issues for further clarification. It was envisaged that issues such as remittance of fees and form of licence would be discussed by the Department of Conservation and Fish & Game, with a view to making a decision before the end of September 2018.

Councillor Morris indicated that NZ Council indicated that it would undertake a job sizing and pay structure exercise for managers/CEs with a view to providing guidance to regional Fish & Game Councils on setting remuneration for Managers/CEs.

Councillor Morris indicated that the response to consultation on release of captive reared mallards from regional Fish & Game Councils was consistent which indicated some concerns on widespread use of the practice, except for Hawke's Bay Fish & Game Council which had a contrary view. The issue is still under active consideration.

Councillor Morris indicated that there would be discussions with the Minister responsible for forestry to establish who is responsible for forestry debris and scouring out of spawning streams – with clarification sought on the responsibilities of loggers and regional councils.

Councillor Morris confirmed that NZ Council would be submitting several contestable funding applications including a 0.8 FTE for marketing R3 project, and a 0.6FTE for RM national co-ordinator.

Councillor Morris confirmed that \$45,000 was confirmed for Central South Island Fish & Game Council to seek prosecution of ECan for damage to a spawning stream.

Martin Taylor gave a brief overview of recent media messaging from NZ Fish & Game Council to ensure the Government remained committed to deliver improvements in water quality. This included maintaining public awareness in improving water quality outcomes. It appeared that currently the Government remained committed to principles and actions to improve water quality. The agricultural industries were seeking to (re-)establish a strong social license to operate (e.g. Fonterra advertisement messaging) which could result in leverage for improving water quality being lost. The issue of farm dumps was as much pointing out the poor compliance actions of regional councils and getting regional councils to take appropriate action. Chairman Cotsilinis confirmed that Council considered the messaging in media reporting on that issue appeared confused and required clarification.

Councillor Shortis sought NZ Council to continue to seek clarification from the Government regarding the stance on irrigation and where the line is drawn on continuance of funding of various schemes under consideration.

Councillor Francis sought NZ Council to clarify how the licence system would continue to treat NZ resident anglers vs non-resident anglers given that some Australian anglers were considering themselves “NZ residents”. He further noted that popular freshwater angling magazines in Australia were continuing to focus business on NZ waters. He considered there needed to be better systems to prove someone is a guide (overseas guide) and mechanisms to control such in terms of the tourism sector.

Councillor Waechter supported the media stance taken, but also considered the requirement for our constituents to have a clear understanding on why Fish & Game advocate certain positions on issues. Mr Taylor also noted that communication to licence holders that threats of access denial should not be a determinant of a position given how water quality is now compared with 15-20 years ago.

After further discussion it was moved that

The report by Councillor Morris on the NZ Fish & Game Council meeting held on 16 and 17 March 2018 be received.

Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara

Carried

8. Public Participation

Chairman Cotsilinis invited members of the public to speak on any particular issues – and there were no speakers forthcoming.

9. Health & Safety Update

Mr Teal provided an overview of the Health & Safety reporting. There was nothing new to report. Follow up would be made on the availability of Epi Pens for treating allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) from insect stings or bites, food, drugs, and other allergens. It was acknowledged that the Department of Conservation had put a temporary halt to using Robinson 44 helicopters pending findings of recent crash investigations. After further discussion it was moved that

The Health and Safety Report overview for February and March be received

Chris O'Meara/Malcolm Francis

Carried

10. Strategic Planning Exercise 2018

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the previous strategic planning exercises undertaken in the last two years and how it was used to prioritise resourcing of projects and/or identify new priority issues for the 2018 year. Discussion ensued on key issues identified:

- Marketing Opportunities – engaging in the NZ Fish & Game Council “R3 programme.”
- Establishing Reservoir fisheries – urban fisheries, Otaki gravel extraction reservoir, permanent fish out pond at Palmerston North, and management of Kourarau Dam (catchment wide issues and lake level management).
- Development of junior angling and hunting opportunities - including Fish In Schools programme
- Access issues for hunters and anglers- GWRC managed areas, continuance of use for hunting on Lake Wairarapa, public liability insurance for Upper Rangitikei River (NZDF land) for angling and forests for hunting.
- Compliance Management
- Potential for research projects – eDNA monitoring of spawning trout, nutrient allocation systems, native fish v trout interactions, research opportunities at historic Masterton hatchery site, sampling of otoliths for microchemistry analysis in three catchments.
- Security quality monitoring information.

Further discussion ensued on public liability insurance - with NZ Fish & Game Council investigating options for an additional 'opt in tick box' for anglers or hunters to pay for public liability cover. Council considered that this was a useful additional option to assure private landholders when negotiating access to waters.

Chairman Cotsilinis confirmed that Council's request for funding of public liability insurance for Upper Rangitikei River (NZDF land) be progressed.

After brief discussion it was moved that

A charge of \$25 be placed on the Backcountry licence for the upper Rangitikei River for the purpose of covering premiums for public liability insurance and that Fish & Game underwrite this for the first year

Jim Cook/Andrew Morris

Carried

11. Draft Annual Budget and Work Plan 2018/19

Mr Teal outlined the budgeting process to establish the priorities for Wellington Fish & Game Council's work plan, and the need to identify any contestable funds above the bulk funding already established.

Discussion ensued on:

- Underwriting the public liability insurance requirements for Upper Rangitikei River access - \$7,000 contestable funding
- Salary adjustments to acknowledge internal equity within Fish & Game organisation – to be recommended by Manager (for staff) and Council's Salaries Committee
- Adequate provision for capital purchases – through provisions in reserves
- Potential for ½ FTE for Fish in Schools project management
- The importance linking Fish & Game messaging with the rural community such as A&P shows and Fielddays. It was agreed that this must be executed with enough resources and done properly to have a positive effect. It was considered that NZ Council should be asked to actively consider public engagement with the rural community (e.g. promotions at Fielddays and A&P shows).

After further discussion it was moved that

The draft budget be moved for the draft Annual Work Plan for 2018/19 with contestable funding be applied for public liability insurance for Upper Rangitikei River Backcountry licence holders, and adjustment of staff salaries to take into account internal pay equity and performance.

Malcolm Francis/Marc Flaws

Carried

12. Policy Review Update – Compliance / Infringement System

Discussion ensued on recent developments on options for infringement notices for Conservation Act offences and Supreme Court judgements on the use of reparation to avoid court action. It was clarified that any proposed infringement notice would not be issued on the spot, but would be issued following an alleged offence being detected and an Offence Notice issued. Council would have a policy on whether an Infringement Notice would be then be issued or prosecution in Courts progressed.

It was noted that public submissions to the Conservation (Infringement System) Bill was still open until 6 April 2018. Discussion ensued on where any public funds derived from issuance of infringement notices would end up:

- Remain with Fish & Game (as dedicated fund/trust)
- Consolidated Fund with Treasury
- Consolidated Fund with Treasury but apply for costs for Fish & Game to process

It was considered any infringement system would help Fish & Game undertake its compliance operation – i.e. to act as a deterrent but not be expensive to administer.

13. Captive Reared Mallard Consultation

Councillor Morris confirmed that NZ Council had received submissions from regional Fish & Game Councils and that there were similar views expressed across the country except for Hawke’s Bay Fish & Game Council. A brief discussion ensued on how potential or perceived conflicts of interest of councillors for Hawke’s Bay Fish & Game Council were dealt with on this issue but it was agreed that they were entitled to present views consistent with their representation. It is still under active consideration by NZ Fish & Game Council.

14. Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions

Mr Teal confirmed that the strained relationship between Rathmoy Game Preserve and its neighbours meant that any compromise to pheasant release options could not be amicably agreed. An option to release 500 birds was suggested by Rathmoy Game Preserve as a compromise from the original application as when this number of birds was previously released there were no reported issues or complaints. Council discussed the option of releasing fewer birds in the context of considering whether this benefited the wider hunting fraternity.

After discussion it was agreed that

Approval be given to Rathmoy Game Preserve to release a maximum of 500 birds in 2018. Further that it be made clear to Rathmoy Game Preserve that all practical efforts be made to avoid any issues with the neighbouring landowner as this will strongly influence if any requests for release in subsequent years will be accepted.

Paul Shortis/Simon Muckley

Carried

15. One Plan Implementation - Update

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the current proposals by Horizons Regional Council to engage stakeholders including an initiative called *Our Freshwater Future*. This will potentially involve setting up a proposed collaborative group made up of industry advocates, Territorial Local Authorities, iwi organisations, and environmental groups. This is likely to be a process on which Horizons will base future long term regional planning. Horizons are planning a number of meetings in May to discuss what potential form any collaborative process may take moving forward.

After discussion it was agreed that in response to Horizons Regional Council a concise letter be drafted to list outcomes that Fish & Game has sought to achieve from the regional council in the last ten years. It is intended to involve NZ Fish & Game Council staff in drafting this response. It should also highlight how similar collaborative processes have not delivered enduring results when vested interests are determining outcomes.

It was then moved

That the update report on the One Plan implementation be received

Jim Cook/Dan Waechter

Carried

16. Wairarapa Water Update

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the considerations by Greater Wellington Regional Council as to whether they will continue to support the dam proposal or not. This decision would be made by the end of June following their deliberations on the Long Term Plan submissions. It was agreed that the strategy of the irrigation proponents would be to establish a separate entity on which to leverage funding opportunities, establish a potential sunset clause of support from GWRC, and to engage with the Minister of Regional Development to get funding.

It was then moved that

The update report on the Water Wairarapa project be received and any actions be taken to advocate for maintaining water quality at current state

Don Scott/Paul Shortis

Carried

17. Wairarapa Moana Update

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the letter from the Office of Treaty Settlements dated 14 March 2018 regarding the progress of Treaty settlements for the Ruamahanga catchment including Lake Wairarapa.

Further discussion ensued on the legislation to enact the Treaty settlement and the need to have a clause protecting access rights for current recreational users, that can't be usurped by a management group.

It was agreed that the Chairman and Regional Manager of Wellington Fish & Game Council and Chief Executive of NZ Fish & Game Council would seek a meeting with the Crown Treaty Negotiator to ensure these rights are protected.

Further discussion continued on the wide geographic consideration of the entire catchment and whether there could be any unintended consequences for recreational users.

Mr Teal confirmed that a permit had been approved and extended for the PhD student for sampling of sports fish in lakes Kohangapiriri, Kohangatera, Wairongamai.

Mr Teal provided a brief update of the Wairarapa Moana Management Group where at the last meeting he had emphasised the importance of outcome based research and requested an itemised budget for projects proposed for the upcoming financial year.

It was then moved

That the report on the update to Lake Wairarapa management be received

Malcolm Francis /Chris O'Meara

Carried

18. Mallard Research Project

Mr Teal noted that a summary of the mallard research was provided by Dr Kavermann for the Pre-Game Season Fish & Game Magazine. Mr Teal confirmed that there should be additional efforts to co-ordinate additional communications via different media (e.g. publicity, e-newsletters, and social

media such as Facebook) and that NZ Fish & Game Council would be requested to co-ordinate such. Mr Teal had also requested that the research co-ordinators for the project provide a concise summary of research findings and how they would change management actions and outcomes, as well as future research needs identified and noted as a priority.

After discussion it was moved

To receive the update on the mallard research

Malcolm Francis/Chris O'Meara

Carried

19. Junior Angler Promotions

Councillor Shortis provided a brief overview of the main objectives of resurrecting part of the old hatchery facility in Masterton – primarily to be driven as a research facility. Dr Canning could provide a list of potential projects that could be undertaken there – either of direct interest in Fish & Game or as a collaborative projects between other interests such as Universities and Iwi organisations.

Councillor Scott supported the concept as educational opportunities that this could provide might tie into Fish in Schools and fish out day promotions – such as promoting awareness of the environment,.

It was agreed to proceed with the feasibility study, although Mr Taylor noted that there is an internal debate within Fish & Game regarding funding of hatchery type facilities. He noted that these facilities could be very resource intensive and that planning needed to conservatively estimate operational and capital expenditure requirements and be in a position to independently fund these.

Councillor Waechter noted that Koraunui School was seeking to expand the current Fish in Schools project and he was working through some of the logistics such as finding a reliable water source. He noted that discussions had been held with science educators indicating potential expansion of the programme to include science in libraries, dissection options, identifying what wild fish feed on, and tying flies to imitate local food options, and potentially attending fish out pond opportunities.

Councillor Francis requested that all the volunteers be brought together to discuss options for co-ordination and improving communication with teachers.

Discussion also ensued on funding options for the Fish in Schools programme: \$700 from RSA Stokes Valley with a \$300 shortfall to paid for

from budgeted project funds. Councillor Waechter considered that RSA Stokes Valley should be acknowledged as a sponsor on a tank background display sheet or logo sticker. It was agreed that a more purpose designed canvas cover to suit the tank (rather than black polythene) would provide a more appropriate image.

The meeting was adjourned at 6.45pm for dinner and reconvened at 7.45pm

Mr Taylor and Councillor Johnson left the meeting at 7.45pm.

After discussion it was moved

To receive the update on the novice fish and hunting programmes

Chris O'Meara/ Dan Waechter

Carried

20. Proposal for Fish Farm - Spirulina

Mr Teal provided an overview of the response provided to the proponents of an application to farm spirulina (a cyanobacteria) near Himatangi which required a permit from MPI for fish farming. This was provided for information only and no further response is required at this stage.

21. Access Issues

Mr Teal briefly outlined issues at:

- **Otaki River Mouth** – that additional signage was being developed to satisfy local residents of informing hunting was being undertaken in area. A potential letter drop could be considered if necessary.
- **Waitawa Lakes** – informed by new leasees of Forest Lakes Camp that they wished to restrict access to Hutt Valley Coarse Anglers only
- **Iwi-owned wetlands – Manawatu/Rangitikei** – sought meeting with iwi groups who have/are formally completing land transfers post Treaty settlement. Meeting with hapu responsible for Koitiata and Pukepuke sites seeking to continue hunting at sites in the short term and possibly long term.
- **Forest Blocks** – possible requirements for public liability insurance in future, but not a requirement this year. Tangimoana Forest have different restrictions and requirements for access having been transferred to iwi group.

22. Management Report 1 February 2018 – 16 March 2018

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of work being completed in the summer work programme by staff and acknowledged their dedicated and diligent efforts to complete.

It was noted that there was a pulse of turbid water in the Rangitikei River near Mangaweka, and would be checked with Horizons Regional Council that it was a recurring natural slip causing this.

After further discussion it was moved that

The management report for 1 February 2018 – 16 March 2018 be received.

Dan Waechter /Jim Cook

Carried

23. Fish & Game Licence Sales

Mr Teal referred to the summary in the project report documents noting that licence sales for fish were similar as previous year's sales.

After further discussion it was moved

The Fish Licence Sales report as at 6 March 2018 be received

Dan Waechter/Chris O'Meara

Carried

24. Expenditure Report

After brief discussion on the Income and Expenditure Summary Report, Mr Teal confirmed that the GST figure appeared high in the cash based reporting as a payment had been made in September for a six monthly GST payment and referred to payments in the previous financial year, but GST was now reported and paid on a two-monthly basis.

It was moved that

the Expenditure Report for 28 February 2018 and Financial Transactions for January and February 2018 be approved

Don Scott Jim Cook

Carried

25. Contribution Awards

Council confirmed a list of potential recipients and added three more (John Millar, Simon Robertson, Max Lutz) based on criteria for considering recognising contributions to the Wellington Fish & Game Council organisation or wider fish and game resource.

Further consideration was given on how to best publicise these awards and leverage positive publicity.

26. Correspondence and Media

There was brief discussion on media and correspondence. It was moved that ***the Correspondence and Media Report be received***

Andrew Morris/Jim Cook

Carried

27. General Business

It was noted that this year's World Water Day would be commemorated on 22 March 2018 and focus on how we can use nature to overcome modern water challenges including floods management, drought tolerance, and water pollution – all made worse by degraded vegetation, soil, rivers and lakes.

Councillor Waechter noted that a GIS analyst from Hutt City Council had established several map layers on their GIS System including: a river layer, sampling points and measures, and soil types in sub-catchments such as the Mangaroa catchment. Mr Spence had indicated interest to Councillor Waechter in including potential information layers on trout spawning streams, and site access for recreational anglers.

Councillor Waechter provided several examples of where potential pollution is entering in the Hutt River catchment through groundwater and sought follow up from the Regional Council:

- Residual ponds and potential leaching from a pig farming operation;
- Construction operations near Pakuratahi, Kaitoke
- "Clean fill" dump site at end of Gillespie Rd Upper Hutt with potential yellow leachate entering the Akatarawa River.

Councillor Morris – noted that Hutt City Council and GWRC had a good communication database and network to notify residents with text messages, emails, and local newspaper advisories – for issues such as dog owners public awareness of potentially toxic cyanobacteria blooms.

Discussion ensued on whether there was unequivocal evidence to prove whether the use of 1080 was affecting the trout fishery or not. The messaging from various research was confusing in that there appeared to have some potential to affect invertebrates (trout diet) and 1080 could be reflected in trout flesh – but the later was not of sufficient concern as a health risk to humans. The recently stated NZ Fish & Game Council position that was neutral/supporting its use had resulted in considerable comments from outdoor recreational users. It was agreed to request a summary paper be drafted by NZ Fish & Game Council that summarised the research to date that unequivocally proves the trout fishery is affected or not.

There being no further business the meeting was concluded at 8.30pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Wairarapa Club, Masterton Tuesday 12 June 2018 at 3.00pm.

Chairman_____

Date_____