

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 175th MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW
ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 11th APRIL 2019 AT 12.00PM**

Present

Crs Murray Ferris, Barry Roderick, David Woolner, Lindsay Lyons, Laurance Tamati, Geoff Thomas, Ngahi Bidois, and Alan Baird.

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson, Matt McDougall, Anthony van Dorp, Lynne Sands, Mark Sherburn, John Meikle, Eben Herbert, Matt Osborne, Carmel Veitch, and Lloyd Gledhill (Eastern Fish & Game); Dave Conley (Department of Conservation).

1.0 WELCOME AND KARAKIA

- 1.1 Cr Murray Ferris (Chairman) opened the meeting at 12.03pm, welcomed all present, and invited Cr Ngahi Bidois to perform a karakia before the meeting got underway.
- 1.2 Murray advised that he had returned from overseas late the night before and had been unable to prepare for the meeting as he normally would have done. He asked that the meeting be chaired instead by Vice Chairman David Woolner. David advised he was happy to do this and proceeded to call for apologies.

2.0 APOLOGIES

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Crs Ken Coombes and Adam Rayner; Helen Neale (Department of Conservation); and Ken Raureti (Bay of Plenty Conservation Board).
- 2.2 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Alan Baird) that the apologies for the 175th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [19/04/2.2]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (12 FEBRUARY 2019)

- 3.1 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Lindsay Lyons) that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2019 be confirmed as a true and correct record subject to the following amendment:*

Item 10.5, second sentence - amend "Cr Barry Roderick suggested we could consider halting liberations of trout into Lake Okataina" to "Cr Barry Roderick suggested we could consider reducing liberations of trout into Lake Okataina". [19/04/3.1]

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 There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2019

6.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

- Cr Lindsay Lyons – Shags on the Rangitaiki River
- Cr Murray Ferris – Wairoa Angling Club re co-opting members to Council
- Cr Lindsay Lyons – Alternative sources of revenue

7.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

7.1 No conflicts of interest were identified.

8.0 2019 – 2020 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

- 8.1 Andy Garrick informed Council that normally the draft Operational Work Plan (OWP), budget and any contestable funding bids for 2019-2020 operational year would be presented to this meeting for review and amendment if necessary before the budget and bids were submitted to the Managers and New Zealand Council for approval and inclusion in the licence fee setting process. This year however, due to the NZC changing its meeting dates, this was not possible and in recognition of this this Council agreed at it's last meeting to delegate the task to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee dealt with this in mid March and the NZC had since received our budget, approved the single contestable funding bid Eastern had submitted, and taken these figures into account when it agreed on proposed licence fees for 2019-2020 in early April. Andy noted that while this was the case there was still opportunity for Council to make changes to the draft OWP so long as any changes to budgets remained within the region's allocated bulk fund.
- 8.2 Andy provided a brief overview of the changes made to the OWP since the last meeting and pointed out the need to present a conservative budget in light of reduced licence sales.
- 8.3 Andy highlighted the significant changes to costs within the OWP which included the increased price of fish food which now had to be sourced from overseas, and the likelihood of reduced revenue from Hawke's Bay Fish & Game as a formal longer term contract with them had been put on hold. He advised that in the meantime, the Hawke's Bay Region would be invoiced on a month by month basis for services we provided to it. Cr Murray Ferris queried whether future assistance would depend on the outcome of the audit undertaken late last year? Andy Garrick advised that this was a consideration, but both regions also needed to determine what contribution Hawke's Bay staff could make to this region.
- 8.4 Cr Barry Roderick commented on ongoing investigations into establishing an enhanced fishery in the western Bay of Plenty and asked whether some of the large fish raised for release to the Rotorua lakes might also be considered for release into the Ruahihi Canal. He noted that last year's release of large fish into Lake Rotorua had been a very newsworthy topic and had generated very positive publicity. Mark Sherburn advised this was a possibility that could be discussed further once fish had been grown to an appropriate size, and decisions had been made on the fishery to be enhanced.
- 8.5 Cr David Woolner queried the reduction in spending on access projects yet the OWP proposed an increased emphasis on access? Anthony van Dorp advised that access work would continue to be undertaken by staff and contractors, and Andy added that that there was also a pressing need to have more access information including maps available and easily located on our website. It was noted that the reduction in spending in this output was associated with administering hunter ballots rather than being directly related to access initiatives.
- 8.6 Cr Barry Roderick commented on this region's contribution to national programmes and the time that staff spend on this. Barry felt that a figure needed to be placed on this effort to counter comments Councillors continued to receive from other regions that the Eastern Region was overstaffed. Andy Garrick acknowledged Barry's comments and added that the real issue was not so much that this region was overstaffed but that other regions were understaffed. Barry noted that while this may be the case it would be

useful to quantify how much time staff devote to national and other regional Fish & Game undertakings.

8.7 Cr Geoff Thomas referred to the proposal to review options for establishing a trophy fishery at Lake Okataina and asked whether this was new? Andy Garrick advised that this had been contemplated a number of times in the past, but there was no reason why Council shouldn't review the concept again and take a look at options that hadn't previously been trialled or given a fair chance to succeed.

8.8 ***Agreed (Alan Baird/Ngahi Bidois) that Council receives the draft 2019-2020 Operational Work Plan and confirms that no further amendments are required at this stage. [19/04/8.8]***

9.0 WAIKAREMOANA SPORTS FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT FUND

9.1 Andy Garrick provided a brief overview of the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Fund advising that interest proceeds from the fund were available to utilise for defined purposes. He said that an intensive three-year survey and monitoring programme had been completed in the last operational year but there remained a need for ongoing monitoring, access, and buoy related work which would require further funding during the 2019-20 operational year. The amount required to be drawn down totalled \$9,350 which would offset staff time and expenses associated with these projects. Andy sought approval from Council to incorporate this amount of funding into the 2019-20 OWP.

9.2 ***Agreed (Barry Roderick/Lindsay Lyons) that Council approves up to \$9,350 to be drawn from the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund for the ongoing monitoring, access and buoy related programmes. [19/04/9.2]***

10.0 TIMING OF OPENING OF FISHING SEASON ON SELECTED LAKES

10.1 Council discussed the merits of opening the trout fishing season on the first Saturday in October on Lakes Tarawera, Okataina, and Rotoiti. Councillors' comments were generally supportive, and topics discussed included:

- The many variations in season openings and closing both within the region and elsewhere within NZ that currently apply.
- Awareness and compliance can be enhanced with more widespread signage as Taupo fishery does.
- Limitations associated with the 2016-17 opening day survey of anglers which fell on a Saturday.
- Addressing congestion at boat ramps.
- Loss of opportunity for some anglers and families by delaying opening to the first Saturday in October, as this would push it out to the last weekend of the school holidays in some years.
- Merits of shifting the opening of all waters to the first Saturday in October.
- Need to establish level of support doing this nationally.
- Need to establish what anglers want.
- Opportunity to make a real event of opening if it was changed to first Saturday.

10.2 Cr Barry Roderick moved that Council seek support for changing the opening of the new fishing season to the first Saturday of October nationally. Cr David Woolner felt that more discussion was required within this Council first, followed up with a survey of anglers. Cr Alan Baird supported this topic being included in the 2020 biennial review of the Anglers Notice, and Cr Lindsay Lyons noted that it may not get buy in from non-lake fishery regions. Barry subsequently withdrew his motion, and Andy

outlined the consultation process associated with the Anglers Notice review, noting the lead into this provided sufficient time to gather more information before then.

10.3 *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Laurance Tamati) that Council supports carrying forward the proposal to move opening of the trout fishing season to the 1st Saturday in October for consideration in conjunction with the biennial Anglers Notice review. [19/04/10.3]*

10.4 Cr Murray Ferris suggested that in the meantime staff could consider ways to address some of the issues that had been raised with regard to the proposal, and Cr David Woolner suggested staff might be able to undertake a survey of Eastern fish licence holders to measure their support. Cr Ngahi Bidois was in support of a survey if the costs of doing so were acceptable, and suggested if the survey indicated a low level of support for shifting the opening to the first Saturday in October, another event could be staged on the Saturday to celebrate the opening and generate interest in the occasion.

11.0 CHILDREN'S FISHING DAY DONATIONS

11.1 Andy Garrick provided Council with a brief overview of the ongoing support the Rotorua Anglers Association provides in hosting the four children's fish out days each year. He advised that these events provided children with an introduction to trout fishing while also supporting the club's fundraising efforts through the donations received from those participating. Andy noted that Fish & Game, Kilwell, and Rainbow Springs subsidise/sponsor the programme. Mark Sherburn acknowledged the support of the Rotorua Anglers too, and informed Council that the club rallies at least 20 volunteers for each fish out day and Fish & Game simply doesn't have the manpower to run these events on its own.

11.2 Dave Conley provided a brief rundown of the Taupo programme which was currently co-ordinated by a charitable trust to get kids in to fishing. He outlined the benefits covered by the trust's fees which are substantially higher than what is being charged in Rotorua.

11.3 Council was supportive of the Rotorua Angler Association's request acknowledging that the amount of the proposed donation was still very reasonable at \$5 per child.

11.4 Cr Barry Roderick asked whether it was possible for the Tauranga Anglers Club to come to, or run an event similar to what some other out of town clubs had undertaken? Andy advised this was an option and that it had been offered to the club previously.

11.5 Cr Lindsay Lyons asked whether there were any statistics on the number of children who take up trout fishing after attending these fish out days. Andy advised that this was not something that had been monitored in the past but could and probably should be as part of our R3 research programme. Andy noted that the draft 2019-20 OWP proposed training seminars for adult beginners drawn from the parents whose children have attended fish out days as an additional recruitment strategy.

11.6 *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Laurance Tamati) that Council supports raising the recommended donation per child to participate in the children's fishing programme from \$3 to \$5 per child, 2/3 of which will go to the Rotorua Anglers Association. [19/04/11.6]*

12.0 PRESENTATION FROM MARK SHERBURN ON THE HATCHERY

12.1 Mark Sherburn presented via power point an overview of the hatchery and its breeding programme.

13.0 GAME BIRD HUNTING CODE OF CONDUCT

13.1 Council discussed the proposed Game Bird Hunting Code of Conduct on which feedback was sought. Items discussed included:

- Removal of rubbish and disposal of carcasses (it was noted that six Fish & Game regions had this as a Schedule 2 regulation and it was suggested it might be better put it into Schedule 1 so it was common to all regions. It was noted however that this might make it unenforceable whereas it can probably be prosecuted under Schedule 2 – which needs to be verified).
- Concern was raised that keeping firearms out of sight while travelling was an offence (Anthony Van Dorp advised this was not the case and was actually encouraged by the Police).
- The section “support efforts to manage our game birds and their habitat” could identify predator control as an example of an appropriate undertaking.
- Where mallard populations are under pressure hunters could be encouraged to target greenheads though these can be difficult to distinguish in flight and in poor light.

13.2 Cr Barry Roderick wished to acknowledge and thank Otago staff for their work on producing this proposed Game Bird Hunting Code of Conduct.

14.0 SPECIES MONITORING REPORT

14.1 Council received the 2018 Executive Summary for the Rotorua Lakes Opening Day Survey Report.

15.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

15.1 *Tongariro-Taupo Conservation Board*

No Report.

15.2 *Bay of Plenty Conservation Board*

No Report.

15.3 *Department of Conservation*

Dave Conley spoke on behalf of the Department of Conservation fishery team. He said that the Taupo fishery had seen a good couple of years back to back and while not as good as it had been immediately prior to that it was still producing some good fish. By increasing the bag limit and decreasing the size limit, it appears there has been a 15-20% increase in harvest. A lot of work had been put into access opportunities and working with the Regional Council on woody weeds in the Eastern rivers. The increase in tourism has meant increased costs in maintaining road access. Over the next year there would be an increased focus on the Lake Otamangakau fishery and in particular, monitoring of harvest pressure and impacts of catch and release practices. Cr Barry Roderick queried what was happening with the proposal to farm trout in Lake Rotoaira. Dave advised that the Provincial Growth Fund was driving it. He said the proposal had arisen from a couple of business development advisors but to say it represents the wider hapu or Tuwharetoa view would be wrong. Barry ask whether he saw salmon farming as an opportunity in the North Island? Dave couldn't advise on this as salmon would be a new organism to the North and this would present a number of regulatory hurdles for Minister of Conservation approval. Farming salmon may also be a risky proposition in the warmer environment here.

15.4 Cr Laurance Tamati left the meeting at 2.35pm.

15.5 *New Zealand Fish and Game Council*

Cr Lindsay Lyons' report featured the following:

- Recent tragedy in Christchurch and subsequent changes to the gun laws.
- Audits of Fish & Game Councils.
- New Zealand Council/Managers combined meeting.
- Appointment of Jack Kos to the new Policy/Development position in the National Office.
- Staff Development approvals – Erin Garrick and Helen Trotter.
- Relocation of the National Office Game Bird Habitat Trust Stamp artwork.
- Presentation on alternative sources of funding.
- Trout farming.

16.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

- 16.1 Cr Barry Roderick had observed that duck numbers appeared to be good in spring but clutch size became smaller as the breeding season progressed. Matt McDougall said that September had been the driest we had seen. While the breeding season appeared to have been longer this year, the survival of the progeny of late producers is often poor particularly when mid to late summer conditions are dry. Pre-season modelling suggested poor breeding and this was backed up with observations from the trapping samples staff obtained in January.
- 16.2 Cr Lindsay Lyons wished to acknowledge the contribution Anthony van Dorp had made to the development of the draft National Infringement Notice Policy and the revised National Prosecution Policy.
- 16.3 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Ngahi Bidois) that Council receives the Management and Health and Safety reports. [19/04/16.3]***
- 16.4 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Lindsay Lyons) that Council receives the Finance Report and approves payments for January and February 2019 totalling \$356,648.75. [19/04/16.4]***
- 16.5 Council also received the Licence Sales report.

17.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

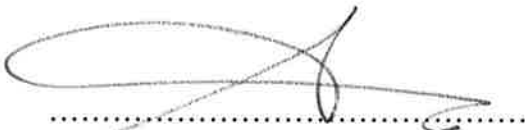
- 17.1 Council discussed the Wairoa District Angling Club request to co-opt a representative from the Wairoa area to Council to fill one of the two vacant positions (letter included within Papers for Information). After some discussion Council requested the Chairman thank the Club for its suggestion and for proposing Alan Robinson as a suitable candidate. Councillors considered Alan would be a good person to recruit to Council and Cr Barry Roderick supported Alan being co-opted with or without full voting rights. Cr Lindsay Lyons however, suggested Council should keep its options open for a bit longer yet. Cr David Woolner advised Council needed to decide what the gap was it wanted to fill before it appointed any additional Councillors.
- 17.2 Andy Garrick advised he wanted to highlight another item in the Papers for Information, this being the very generous donation of \$5,000 for the hatchery and children's fishing programme from Mr JB Galbraith of Cambridge. Barry queried whether we have a formal policy to deal with this and whether the donor would like to be acknowledged publicly. Andy advised that he had not sought recognition for his donation, but wanted to show his support for what we do. He noted Fish & Game has a National Bequest Policy now, the principles of which Eastern Fish & Game has previously proposed could be applied to donations also.
- 17.3 Cr Lindsay Lyons had been phoned by an angler concerned about the large numbers of shags likely to be taking trout in the Rangitaiki river. It was recognised that Fish & Game could not do anything other than to suggest the angler discuss his concern with

the Department of Conservation. Lindsay undertook to provide this feedback to the angler.

- 17.4 Cr Lindsay Lyons raised the need for Fish & Game to look at alternative sources of income noting Fish & Game's almost total reliance on licence sales. Council discussed a number of opportunities that could be investigated within this region, e.g. inviting bequests and donations, leasing accommodation, providing a venue for meetings and/or weddings or other functions, engaging a business development manager, growing more fish for other regions, growing larger fish for release, taking over the Taupo fishery. It was suggested it might be useful for Council to conduct a workshop on this item or convene a group of Councillors and staff.

18.0 MEETING CLOSED

- 18.1 The meeting was closed at 3.12pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Murray Ferris', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Murray Ferris
Chairman

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

2.0 APOLOGIES

- 2.2 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Alan Baird) that the apologies for the 175th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [19/04/2.2]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (12 FEBRUARY 2019)

- 3.1 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Lindsay Lyons) that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2019 be confirmed as a true and correct record subject to the following amendment:
Item 10.5, second sentence - amend "Cr Barry Roderick suggested we could consider halting liberations of trout into Lake Okataina" to "Cr Barry Roderick suggested we could consider reducing liberations of trout into Lake Okataina". [19/04/3.1]*

8.0 2019-2020 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

- 8.8 *Agreed (Alan Baird/Ngahi Bidois) that Council receives the draft 2019-2020 Operational Work Plan and confirms that no further amendments are required at this stage. [19/04/8.8]*

9.0 WAIKAREMOANA SPORTS FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT FUND

- 9.2 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Lindsay Lyons) that Council approves up to \$9,350 to be drawn from the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund for the ongoing monitoring, access and buoy related programmes. [19/04/9.2]*

10.0 TIMING OF OPENING OF FISHING SEASON ON SELECTED LAKES

- 10.3 *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Laurance Tamati) that Council supports carrying forward the proposal to move opening of the trout fishing season to the 1st Saturday in October for consideration in conjunction with the biennial Anglers Notice review. [19/04/10.3]*

11.0 CHILDREN'S FISHING DAY DONATIONS

- 11.6 *Agreed (Geoff Thomas/Laurance Tamati) that Council supports raising the recommended donation per child to participate in the children's fishing programme from \$3 to \$5 per child, 2/3 of which will go to the Rotorua Anglers Association. [19/04/11.6]*

16.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

- 16.3 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Ngahi Bidois) that Council receives the Management and Health and Safety reports. [19/04/16.3]*
- 16.4 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Lindsay Lyons) that Council receives the Finance Report and approves payments for November and December 2018 totalling \$356,648.75. [19/04/16.4]*