

NORTH CANTERBURY FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Held on Wednesday 12 December 2018
At 595 Johns Road, Harewood
Commencing at 6.30 pm**

1. Present:

Councillors: Alan Strong (Chair) Dan Maxwell, Bill Southward, Paul Hodgson, Rex Gibson, Stu Henderson, Trevor Isitt, Roy Knight, Richard O'Keefe, Phillip Musson, Dave Coll, Ken Lee

Staff: Rod Cullinane, Debbie Ambler, Tony Hawker, Scott Pearson, Steve Terry, Dirk Barr, Richard Cosgrove

In Attendance: Martin Taylor (CEO, NZ Fish and Game), Paul Watts, Larry Burke, Mike Agar, Michael Bate, Greg Tarras, Phil Ball, Geoff Clark, Wayne Eastwick, David Kirkness, Martyn Baker, Marian Baker, Denis Kelliher, Ron Stuart, P Ellmers

2. Apologies:

Councillors: Chris Brankin, Dave O'Neill

Staff: Emily Arthur-Moore

Public: Dean Coles

3. Welcome

Cr Strong opened the meeting by introducing himself as the new Chair of North Canterbury Fish and Game Council and stated that this meeting would run by local body rules. Time for General Business would be at the end of the meeting. Cr Strong then introduced M Taylor, CEO of New Zealand Fish and Game.

4. Confirmation of Minutes from the 2017 Annual General Meeting

"That the minutes from the 2017 AGM be confirmed".

Moved: Cr Southward

Seconded: R O'Keefe

Carried

5. Public Presentation

Lowland Streams and Water Fowl – Michael Bate – presented a slide show showing the degradation of rivers and streams in the North Canterbury catchment due to chemical weed spraying. The major problem was management of spraying and land use effects. Mr Bate asked for assistance from Fish and Game to stop the use of sprays in and around waterways. Cr Strong suggested a visit to Snake Creek to see what can be done to re-establishing a waterway. M Bates, T Hawker and E Arthur-Moore to co-ordinate to find a solution.

6. Presentation of the Ian "Mac" McCrory Volunteer Trophy

R Cullinane explained the trophy was given in memory of Ian McCrory to recognise the volunteers who support Fish and Game. The recipient for 2018 was Mr Larry Burke. He accepted the award on behalf of all volunteers saying there was a good team of volunteers assisting Fish and Game and all felt the need to assist to restore the fishery.

7. Presentation of the 2018 Environment Awards

S Pearson introduced the two recipients for this year's Award.

a. **Manuka Point Station and Hunting Lodge**

This station is located in the headwaters of the Rakaia River, situated on the true left bank, opposite Double Hill Station. Access is across the mainstem of the Rakaia, so not for the faint hearted. The farm's main source of income is from the Commercial Deer Park operation, offering wealthy international hunters the chance to shoot a trophy stag or fish in pristine waters. The farm also has a modest livestock operation, with some sheep and presently no cattle.

Don and Julie Patterson bought the farm over 15 years ago and are great stewards of the land having run a high-yielding, low environmental impact operation. The existence of healthy tussock drylands and wetland plant species on their property is testament to their desire to keep things as natural as possible which is very commendable, given the pressures on many high country farms to intensify their farming operations.

The rewards for this approach are easy to observe, with the Lodge set in a stunning mountainous location, bordered by tussock grasslands and native forest. Their desire to work with the environment has delivered significant benefits for our spawning areas and also helped maintain a wider diversity of plant and animal species in the area.

Staff have a long history of working with Manuka Point Station, given the primary spawning streams on their property and the recent spawning stream monitoring undertaken by Fish and Game.

Don and Julie are great ambassadors across both the farming and sports hunting/fishing sectors. They have also focused on environmental initiatives within their lodge, for personal reasons and to ensure they are walking the talk with their discerning clients.

We felt their positive efforts worthy of the award.

b. **Middle Rock Station**

Middle Rock is located in the upper Selwyn Catchment, bordering with Coleridge Downs, at the top of the farm.

Bruce and Lyn Nell have farmed Middle Rock since 1973. Recently their daughter Charlotte and her husband, Vince have joined them. The property runs entirely sheep. Their approach to farming is a great conservation story, because during the 70s and 80s, when farmers were encouraged (via subsidies) to clear land and fully drain wetlands, they chose a more conservative approach.

Today we see a property where a lot of the indigenous vegetation remains intact. There are excellent examples of tussock grasslands, tall matagouri stands and wetlands in relatively unspoiled condition. Their approach was to utilise the features of the land to enhance their farming operation. This included the ability to graze grasslands bordering wetlands during times of drought, making use of the greater water retention the wetlands afford. This did put some pressure on the wetland vegetation at the time, but they never allowed the impact to go beyond a recoverable level during the droughts.

They also chose to keep matagouri stands in their paddock, as during the winter months these would break-up the snow pack, allowing animals to access critical food supplies. The vegetation would also offer important protection from the weather and during lambing. Some pathway clearance is required in the matagouri to maintain stock access and farmer access to retrieve stock, but overall the vegetation is preserved.

As wool and lamb prices fell, the temptation was to bring in cattle and intensify their operation. They choose not to, and instead ran a lean and innovative operation, such as creating lane-ways between paddocks, to reduce the need to open and close gates, saving precious time and staff resources. They also looked to tourism as a means of diversifying their income.

In 1990 Middle Rock opened to tourism initially with garden tours. Soon after a farm tour addition was added. In 2012 the existing shearers' quarters building caught fire and led to a complete rebuild. In 2015 Middle Rock opened The Shearers' Quarters – Middle Rock as purpose build tourism accommodation, attracting a diverse clientele of domestic and international visitors.

The end result is a profitable and resilient farm that has stayed in the family, in an area of stunning high country scenery. The Nells are therefore very deserving of the award and set a great example to other high country farmers, that alternative options can exist as opposed to more intensive stocking and farm development.

M Taylor presented the Awards to both parties.

8. Summary of Issues and Achievements 2017/2018

R Cullinane stated the year had been challenging for the region particularly with the salmon fishery in decline and lowland trout fishery under pressure by angler demand and degraded habitat.

Other points to note were;

- licence sales were down by \$89,000 from the previous year which was concerning;
- The National Sea Run Salmon Committee was formed in 2017 following the Salmon Symposium, but has yet to identify a clear strategy for addressing the decline of the salmon fishery;
- the hatchery had continued to produce and release in excess of 190,000 fin clipped 50g salmon smolt along with 8,000 brown trout and 21,000 rainbow trout. 70,000 ova were planted thanks to volunteers;
- NZC commissioned a nation-wide hatchery review, with Cawthron Institute reviewing salmonid stocking practices and combined with recommendations from the National Sea Run Salmon Committee would determine what is the most appropriate model for the North Canterbury region;
- Council need to urgently address the financial challenges the Region is facing;

- The Youth Programme had a successful year integrating into 30 schools around the region. The Programme had to be terminated however due to reduced hatchery output and lack of funding;
- staff completed all core outputs in the Operational Work Programme and thanked staff for dedication;
- the election of eight new councillors in addition to co-opted members from Ngai Tahu and Federated Farmers.

9. 2017/18 Annual Performance Report

Cr Strong firstly apologised for the Report being in Draft and advised that Council had only just passed a resolution to accept the Annual Performance Report.

Of note;

- accounts showing a surplus due to a Bequest of \$500,000.00 received during the financial year;
- In conjunction with BDO, some Reserves had been written off to reflect liquidity;
- The Bequest showed a spend of \$50,000.00. Council passed a resolution at an earlier meeting that this amount would be repaid to the Bequest account.

Cr Strong outlined the audit recently undertaken by NZ Fish and Game of North Canterbury and advised that NCF&G Council had accepted the Audit findings and the 10 recommendations proposed by NZ Council. He advised that part of the findings was to employ a professional governance advisor to assist North Canterbury into a more sustainable position.

10. Staff Presentations

T Hawker - gave an update on fish screens, on the upcoming fish regulations review and the field work being carried out.

Steve Terry - spoke on the importance of landowner liaison for completion of scientific work, concerned with small fish being harvested from Lake Heron, currently in the process of collecting samples from around the Rakaia spawning streams to assist in determining bag limits.

Dirk Barr - spoke on the external project work for Winnemem Wintu tribe; on compliance and annual trend counts for gamebirds.

Scott Pearson - spoke on returning key salmon spawning sites back into the LWP; on key trout spawning sites currently being GPSed; on a scoping report on recreation amenities looking at visitor and angling numbers that will go into a three year plan; outlined his roles on various working groups and committees in the region; on his advocacy work and his liaison at District Council and ECan level.

11. General Business

- M Baker asked if NCF&G could put pressure on ECan to stop their spraying programme on the lower Rakaia river bank to bank. L Burke stated that the spraying occurs in October/November when smolt are travelling around rivers. R Cullinane stated he would follow up through ECan channels and report back to Council.

T Hawker stated there need to be a national review on using glysohates. S Pearson stated there needed to be good research behind any submission made to Parliament.

- b. In answer to a question from the floor, there was no correlation to the river flow and fingerlings going out to sea.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.42 pm

Chairman: _____

Dated: _____