

**WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON  
TUESDAY 8 OCTOBER 2019 AT 3.10PM AT RSA CLUB WAIRARAPA, 20 ESSEX STREET,  
MASTERTON**

**1. Present:**

Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Aaron Passey, Richard McIntyre, Malcolm Francis, Andrew McGregor, Colin Shore, John Hancock, Paul Shortis, Don Scott, Jim Cook.

**2. In Attendance:**

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Hamish Carnachan, Dr Matt Kavermann

Licence Holders: Mike Murray, John Pansters

**3. Apologies:**

Councillor Andy Tannock, Chris O'Meara

Staff: Peter Wilson, Dr Adam Canning

It was then moved that:

***the apologies be accepted.***

**Aaron Passey/Jim Cook**

Carried

**4. Welcome to Meeting**

Chairman Cotsilinis welcomed members of the public to the meeting and invited them to make any specific points under that dedicated agenda item.

**5. Confirmation of Agenda**

Chairman Cotsilinis confirmed the order of the agenda and late business were identified for inclusion in the agenda item General Business were the Arms Amendment Bill consultation, the Indigenous Fish Bill provisions for disturbing trout spawning, and confirmation of representation at the NZ Council/Governors meeting .

**6. Conflicts of Interest**

A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of Interest.

Councillor Hancock noted that he was a farmer in the Ruamahanga catchment and could potentially have contrary views on submissions

relating to some specific clauses in the proposed Greater Wellington Natural Resource Plan appeals process.

No additional conflicts of interest were declared in relation to items noted in the agenda.

7. **Minutes of Previous Meeting of 20 August 2019**

After a brief discussion it was noted that Dr Kavermann was listed as an apology (and an attendee), and it was moved that:

***the Minutes of the Meeting of Wellington Fish & Game Council of 20 August 2019 (with the appropriate amendment noted above) be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.***

**Malcolm Francis/Paul Shortis**

Carried

8. **Matters Arising from Previous Meeting 20 August 2019**

Council noted the letter from Nic Peet (Strategy and Regulation Group Manager) acknowledging the invite to the Fish & Game Council meeting but requested a delay until after the local government elections which closed for voting on 10 October 2019. It was intended that staff and regional councillors would attend such a meeting.

Councillor Scott sought clarification on what response NZ Council had had to a letter expressing councillors' frustration at not being directly involved in the development of the R3 Plan. Mr Teal noted that the consultant had sent a final copy of the R3 'road map' in the interim before the draft letter had been sent.

Discussion ensued on how trout spawning season information can be used proactively to educate and influence forestry operators. There have been situations in the Otaki catchment where the silt release has been observed. Councillor Francis also provided a summary of the river straightening on the Waikanae River where there were now no fish observed – and no-one will fish the site even though it has easy access. It was acknowledged that foresters were releasing a fair amount of silt into streams – and it was not solely dairy farming that were contributors to siltation. There were examples of impacts on both native fish and trout such as what occurred at the Birchville Dam site. Councillor Francis noted that even though rules were stipulated in the Regional Plans – the outcomes are not consistent with the rules and what is actually happening on the ground.

Councillor Cook provided a summary of negative feedback from licence holders relating to the NZ Council's CE's media commentary varying from core function. Councillor Francis also expressed his concern that there were conflicting messages being delivered by NZ Council communications – that the waterways are severely degraded but buy a licence to go trout fishing in our great waterways. This was exacerbated by the lack of a communications strategy. It was agreed that this be discussed in general business.

Councillor Hancock noted that the set-back from streams for forest management were technically in place (eg Stoney Creek) but there appeared to be little compliance checking ensuring that practices were being followed appropriately.

Council reviewed the Action List to assess whether some items had become superseded or were no longer relevant.

It was considered that development of a regional recognition scheme to highlight good sustainable farming practices is still a good idea and worthy of progressing.

Councillor Shortis noted that a communications strategy was still being developed by NZ Council and specific communications plan for specific issues were anticipated to be part of this. He undertook to raise the issue of how far the National Communications Strategy had been progressed at the next NZ Council meeting – given that it was anticipated to be completed in August. It was also noted that no minutes from the Public Awareness Meeting held in May had been forthcoming from NZ Council staff as part of their co-ordination role – which set to outline actions to be undertaken resulting from the meeting.

Discussion ensued on the Wellington Fish & Game Council questionnaire/submission form (prepared by staff and including input from Dr Adam Canning in particular to ensure key points were noted) for feedback on the Ministry for the Environment's consultation document - *Action Plan for Healthy Waterways*. This needed to be completed by 31 October 2019 and would be sent to Wellington licence holders on 9 October. Councillors noted that it was good to have a complementary approach to that of a form letter response as this is not a favoured approach by all people; had easy options to tick to choose points being made, and was not negative to farming interests. It was confirmed that a separate submission would be made from Wellington Fish and Game Council on the Ministry for the Environment's consultation document.

Councillor Francis noted that NZ Council should still consider options of Tenkara fishing style as noted in the Action List.

**9. NZ Council Meeting - 9 and 10 August 2019**

Councillor Shortis noted that he had already verbally reported on the NZ Council Meeting of 9 and 10 August 2019 at the previous meeting. He further clarified that the Strategic Finance Review Committee was to provide strategic scenarios and needed to define strategic options – and this will be reflected as a strategic plan for whole organisation. This will involve looking at the management of regional and NZC reserves, the NZC role vs regional F&GCs' roles, whether the 12 region makeup is still appropriate and efficient, and the election process. It could be seen as asking the fundamental questions as to the best structure moving forward and can include looking at the NZ Council and the role of their staff. The meeting of governors on 23 November is potentially important as there are varying views from regions as to the appropriate of how NZ Council is dealing with communications – and there might be a need to change the media/communications focus from NZC.

Councillors discussed the issues around the recently announced proposals and consultations on NPS and NES for water management. Councillor McIntyre noted that some regions would be more affected than others – with specifics on fencing issues to be defined (e.g. shifting fencing on productive land). He consider the meeting of N and P limits would eventually be up to the regional councils on how they implement and allocate nutrient discharge to waterways. He believed that regional councils would potentially need to increase staff by up to 20 people to undertake the necessary monitoring. He estimated that a resource consent for wintering on farm might extend to \$2k, and thought the farming community would be more accepting of these changes if the whole community accepted other changes necessary also. Councillor Passey considered it hard to determine the impacts of the NPS and NES given the current level of detail in the documentation. He thought that they were trying to legislate 'best practice' rather than standards. He noted that some regional councils have already progressed some of the provisions – some in anticipation of the proposed NPS provisions being introduced. Chairman Cotsilinis noted that there were fencing issues in Wainuiomata River bank that have readjusted their fencing 10m back from the bank. Councillor Hancock noted that in the proposed Natural Resources Plan for GWRC, provisions for fencing in hill country zones

would make it difficult to farm, narrow gullies fencing to exclude sheep or was physically difficult to exclude cattle.

Discussion ensued on the Fish and Game research programme which saw the NZC CE potentially defining how to manage the research programme.

Discussion ensued on the media coverage of the Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council audit, noting that a copy of the audit had been posted on the Radio NZ website. A brief review of the audit posted on the website indicated no gross negligence or malpractice, and no obvious threats. The Minister made contrasting comments on the audit outcome noting "serious issues around governance". It was understood that NZ Council chairman sent a letter to Bruce Bates asking for him to resign from Hawke's Bay Council.

The Central South Island Fish and Game region's audit also found that the conflicts of interest had been dealt with appropriately and management had provided appropriate advice.

NZ Fish & Game Council communications response has been 'no comment' to media requests for clarification.

Discussion ensued on NZ Fish & Game Council's role and responsibility to protect the "Fish and Game" brand, and remaining silent had left conjecture that by inference all three regions had major governance issues – when the audits did not support that view. It was felt that the Minister, licence holders, and the general public needed reassurance that the governance issues were relatively minor and any improvements were being actively worked on.

One of the media reports also stated that *"RNZ understands a shake-up of the powers and organisation of Fish and Game councils could be in the wings to address issues raised in the (three) audits."* The NZ Council meeting minutes referred to a "reset" but it was ambiguous as to whether this was referring to a financial review or justification. It also had quoted an opposition MP stating that *"the fact a quarter of Fish and Game councils were found to have issues was a worry"*.

Councillor Scott was concerned by what motivated taking issues out of context. His view and that of most councillors was that the regions are by majority doing a good job.

It was agreed that the Chairman would write a letter to NZ Council requesting that they take a more active role in protecting the Fish and Game brand – to give reassurance that governance practices were appropriate and active measures were being taken to improve practices further.

**10. Public Forum**

Chairman Cotsilinis opened the follow to a public forum with John Pansters noting two items:

- Henley Lake – becoming more polluted – water going in and out to flush (been talking about it for 5-6 years). It was agreed that Fish & Game would write to the Masterton District Council after their election to raise the issue on the lake’s management and ask how Fish & Game could assist in the advocacy of improved water quality.
- Mr Pansters indicated that he is halfway through an oversubscribed flyfishing course of 12 anglers (including 4 women) – with a cohort of mainly 30-40 year olds and some retirees. It was suggested that there could be some assistance in developing the course as part of the R3 project (seek assistance in development of material from the NZ Council’s Business Development Manager). Chairman Cotsilinis noted that flyfishing course held at Wellington high schools had been oversubscribed in the last two courses.

**11. Health and Safety**

Mr Teal provided an overview of the Health & Safety reporting for August and September 2019 with no additional actions required..

It was then moved that

***The Health & Safety Report for August and September be received***

**Malcolm Francis/Don Scott**

Carried

**Meeting dates**

Council considered the meeting date proposals and noted that NZ Council would be asked to change their June meeting date until later in June.

It agreed that the following dates be proposed as the basis for a meeting schedule for 2020:

11 February 2020

Palmerston North

24 March 2020	Masterton
9 June 2020	Upper Hutt
11 August 2020	Palmerston North
6 October 2020	Masterton
8 December 2020	Upper Hutt

These dates would be confirmed at the next meeting once other dates such as NZ Council meeting dates had been confirmed.

**12. Consideration of Hunting Season Conditions for 2020 Game Season Review**

Dr Kavermann provided an overview of the monitoring data including the mallard transect data and harvest estimate data. He noted that despite higher numbers of birds being noted in the transect counts – total harvest was not proportionately higher than previous years – which may have been influenced by weather conditions for hunting early in the season and hunter effort (time spent hunting). The preliminary recommendation for mallard hunting conditions be **ten birds per day for an eight week season.**

The data for paradise shelduck were presented – with a relatively stable population being noted. It was agreed that once the paradise shelduck trend counts have been completed in January that a teleconference at the end of January would confirm season conditions.

The data for black swan were presented – with a relatively stable population being noted for central NZ (Wellington/Taranaki/Nelson-Marlborough). It was agreed that once the black swan trend counts have been completed in January that a teleconference at the end of January would confirm season conditions – referring to the game season regulation policy for black swan.

It was moved to

***Receive the report on preliminary recommendations for the 2020 gamebird hunting regulations for Wellington region.***

Jim Cook/Colin Shore  
Carried

**13. Licence Sales System Contract Review**

Discussion ensued on the memo from NZ Fish & Game Council titled “Licence Sales Systems Options” prepared by Chris Owens (Chair, Licence Sub Committee) (updated). It was clarified that the current Licence Management System had been very efficient and effective in dealing with licence processing in recent years but because Fish & Game had changed operational needs (book licences etc) that it was appropriate to seek the market offerings for supplying the service. It was further considered in discrete parts: licence

purchaser interface, business support service, and potential for more sophisticated customer relationship management.

Council considered it prudent to stick with one vendor providing user interface and business support, and noted that it was not Fish and Game's core business to undertake licensing.

It was then moved that

***for User Interface Licence System that Eyede Ltd is the preferred provider, and***

***for The business support services that Eyede Ltd in the preferred provider.***

***This equates to option 1 in the options paper***

Don Scott/Malcolm Francis

Carried

***unanimous***

**14. Policy Review**

Mr Teal noted that it was intended to review the Governance Policy at the December meeting, with assistance offered by councillors Scott, Shortis and Chairman Cotsilinis.

Mr Teal noted that there had been no progress on developing national policy on utilising the infringement notice scheme – which is a requirement before introduction of any scheme.

After brief discussion it was confirmed and moved

***That policy for dedicated reserve JK Donald Wetland Entry Track - revenue generated by vehicle sticker to comply with entry requirements would be accumulated and used solely on the JK Donald Wetland entry track maintenance which crosses private land***

Don Scott/Malcolm Francis

Carried

**15. Annual Project Reports**

It was agreed that each report would be discussed for clarification and that all reports would be received en masse at the conclusion of those discussions.

**Project Report 1111: Sports Fish Population Monitoring**

Councillor Shortis noted the nativist attitude creep on the effect of an introduced fish with the decision on Lindis River Water Quantity appeal a further example of the “pest fish” attitude. Councillor Francis noted that some other processes and documentation such as the Conservation Strategy still noted trout as a valued species. It was considered that the continued education of the lack of effects of trout on native fish population numbers be noted as a high priority.

Dr Kavermann provided an overview of key points in the report.

Councillor Francis noted that on the lower West Coast rivers there was concern that the dry winters were resulting in changes in fish distribution in the river with more fish seen below Jim Cooke Park.

**Project Report 1111A: Trout Spawning Survey**

Mr Carnachan provided an overview of sampling undertaken during the spawning season including waer sampling for subsequent DNA analysis.

**Project Report 1112: Rangitikei Trout Fishery Management**

(received 12 June 2019)

**Project Report 1113: River Control Fishery Assessment**

(received 12 June 2019)

**Project Report 1114: Game Bird Population Assessments**

Dr Kavermann provided an overview of the main points from the monitoring programme. He noted that two sites were not able to be monitored as part of the NZ wide shoveler monitoring programme due to access being denied by landowners in response to NZC CE media comments. Councillor Francis noted that NZ Council needs to hear the consequences of the communications behaviour when consistently targeting the farming industry. Chairman Cotsilinis related that the NZC CE accepts that there will be residual damage when undertaking communications on defining the NPS. Councillors questioned whether the Fish & Game organisation is prepared to accept the residual damage occurring which might be irreparable. It was acknowledged that NZ Council had instructed the NZC CE’s messaging to focus on the statutory role and performance of regional councils, which was done for a period, but with the NPS media responses has empowered him to make negative industry focused comments.

**Project Report 1114A: Wellington Region Banding Report**

Mr Teal provided an overview of report and briefly discussed distribution of birds from banding sites.

**Project Report 1121: National Hunter Harvest Survey**

Dr Kavermann provided an overview of results and noted that the higher number of birds counted in the transect counts did not translate proportionately to higher harvest.

**Project Report 1124: Regional Hunter Survey**

Councillor Shortis noted that email opinion survey on hunting questions could be translated to a survey on angling activities. There was also discussion on the effectiveness of the weekly fishing report and the weekly hunting report – with relatively high open rates.

**Project Report 1124 (1): Hunter Opinions Email Survey**

Main points noted

**Project Report 1124 (2): Parangarahu Lakes Hunter Survey**

Main points noted

**Project Report 1124 (3): Baring Head, East Harbour Hunter Survey**

Main points noted

**Project Report 1124 (4): Waitakere Hunter Survey**

Main points noted

**Project Report 1124 (5): Otaki River Hunter Survey**

Main points noted

**Project Report 1181: Game Bird Dispersal Summary**

Discussion on summary results.

**Project Report: Trend Count of NZ Shoveler Duck 2019**

After discussion it was request that NZC be asked to take action on recommendations (that were repeated annual) to improve the monitoring robustness and relevance.

**Project Report 1211: RMA Advocacy – Wellington Region Activity**

Key points noted

**Project Report 1211A: RM Environmental Managers Report**

Key Points noted

**Project Report 1313: Lake Wairarapa/Hunter Access Permits/other site permits**

Summary and key points noted

**Project Report Communications**

Council commended the communications output and outcomes, acknowledging the efforts of staff lead principally by Mr Carnachan. It was an example of defining a communications strategy and implementing it effectively.

**Project Report 1331: Newsletter**

Noted

**Project Report 1341: Communication to Clients**

Noted. Chairman Cotsilinis noted that angling clubs considered the information is relevant and timely. Councillor Francis noted that the weekly reports were excellent and should maintain a high priority for communications.

**Project Report 1441: Promotions**

Noted

**Project Report 1351: Hunter Training: Lake Omanu**

Council acknowledged the work of Jason Johnstone in organising the novice hunters and also Dr Kavermann for defining a management plan and undertaking actions to enhance the habitat.

**Project Report 1354: Junior Angling**

Mr Carnachan provided an overview of the Fish in Schools programme and acknowledged the efforts of Dr Kavermann in managing some of the Manawatu school sites, and Dan Waechter for his on-going involvement and management of equipment. Discussion ensued on how much bigger the programme could be sustained on the current resources. Councillor Francis noted that there were additional volunteers that were available to assist.

Council acknowledged that the fish out days continue to be well-managed and successful. Chairman Cotsilinis noted that Capital Trout Centre serviced 35 groups in the year and acknowledged the work of Neville Rush and Carmen Cotsilinis in making the operation successful.

**Project Report 1521 and 1531: Ranger Management and Compliance**

Dr Kavermann provided an overview of compliance processing. Council commended the efficient and effective way Dr Kavermann managed the rangers and subsequent compliance actions.

**Project Report: Fish Licence Sales**

Licence sales noted – slightly up compared to previous year.

**Project Report: Game Licence Sales**

Licence sales noted – slightly up compared to previous year.

**Project Report 1621: Licence Agents Annual Summary**

Noted

**Project Report: Occupational Safety and Health Annual Review**

Noted

It was then moved that

***The following project reports be received and confirmed:***

***Project Report 1111: Sports Fish Population Monitoring***

***Project Report 1111A: Trout Spawning Survey***

***Project Report 1112: Rangitikei Trout Fishery Management (received 12 June 2019)***

***Project Report 1113: River Control Fishery Assessment (received 12 June 2019)***

***Project Report 1114: Game Bird Population Assessments***

***Project Report 1114A: Wellington Region Banding Report***

***Project Report 1121: National Hunter Harvest Survey***

***Project Report 1124: Regional Hunter Survey***

***Project Report 1124 (1): Hunter Opinions Email Survey***

***Project Report 1124 (2): Parangarahu Lakes Hunter Survey***

***Project Report 1124 (3): Baring Head, East Harbour Hunter Survey***

***Project Report 1124 (4): Waitakere Hunter Survey***

***Project Report 1124 (5): Otaki River Hunter Survey***

***Project Report 1181: Game Bird Dispersal Summary***

***Project Report: Trend Count of NZ Shoveler Duck 2019***

***Project Report 1211: RMA Advocacy – Wellington Region Activity***

***Project Report 1211A: RM Environmental Managers Report***

***Project Report 1313: Lake Wairarapa/Hunter Access Permits/other site permits***

***Project Report Communications***

***Project Report 1331: Newsletter***

***Project Report 1341: Communication to Clients***

***Project Report 1441: Promotions***

***Project Report 1351: Hunter Training: Lake Omana***

***Project Report 1354: Junior Angling***

***Project Report 1521 and 1531: Ranger Management and Compliance***

***Project Report: Fish Licence Sales***

***Project Report: Game Licence Sales***

***Project Report 1621: Licence Agents Annual Summary***

***Project Report: Occupational Safety and Health Annual Review***

Malcolm Francis/Aaron Passey

Carried

**16. Upland Game Properties with Special Conditions**

Mr Teal noted that he had not received any further updates on progress as to how the three upland game properties with special conditions in the Wellington region would be dealt with under schedule 3 of the Wildlife Act 1953.

**17. Western Region Rivers Resource Consent Applications**

Mr Teal indicated that he would withdraw Council's right to be heard for the Hutt and Wainuiomata rivers part of the consent application – as the applicant GWRC Flood Protection had undertaken to include a Habitat Quality Index as part of its project management practices as well as having their Code of Practice reviewed externally. He noted that he would only sign off with reference to the final (current and dated) version of the draft consent – so it would not apply if subsequent changes are made. The consenting process for Otaki and Waikanae rivers remains active.

It was then moved to

***Receive the report on the Western Region River GWRC consent applications***

Jim Cook/Aaron Passey

Carried

**18. Greater Wellington Regional Council Natural Resources Plan Appeal**

Mr Teal confirmed that a submission had been lodged on Plan Change 2 of the One Plan (Horizons Regional Council) which supported the update of Table 14.2 but had concerns on the de-coupling of some policy and rules, and the transparency surrounding issuance of discretionary consents. It was likely that 'further submissions' would be due by early December and that the plan change would proceed early in 2020. Funding was being sought from the regional Legal Fund co-ordinated by NZ Fish and Game Council.

It was then moved to

***Receive the report on submissions to the Horizons Regional Council Plan Change 2***

Don Scott/Jim Cook

Carried

**19. Greater Wellington Regional Council Natural Resources Plan Appeal**

Mr Teal confirmed that an appeal had been lodged with the Environment Court relating to the decisions of the Commissioners on the proposed Natural Resource Plan. In addition there would be actions to join as interested party as section 274 RMA on substantive appeal points. Funding

was being sought from the regional Legal Fund co-ordinated by NZ Fish and Game Council. It was then moved to

***Receive the report on the appeals by Wellington Fish and Game Council to the GWRC Natural Resources Plan***

Don Scott/John Hancock

Carried

**20. Wairarapa Water Irrigation Project Update**

Councillor Shortis noted that there was now a local body focus on water security/resilience for water supply with a growing recognition that it may not supply lower valley for growth water requirements.

Mr Teal noted that he was awaiting replies from OIAs the Provincial Growth Fund grant to Wairarapa Water Ltd to get specific details. The applications was supported by Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa-Tamaki Nui a Rua Settlement Trust and Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust as well as the Wairarapa Economic Development Governance Group.

Wairarapa Water Ltd requested funding from the PGF to build-on the earlier investigation work completed by Greater Wellington Regional Council and leveraging off the Whaitua Committee's recommendation to increase minimum river flows and the latest climate change forecasts from NIWA. There still appears to be a collaboration between Water Wairarapa Ltd representing private water users, the three Wairarapa district councils, GWRC.

Council business was suspended for dinner at 6.10pm and reconvened at 7.10pm.

**21. Lake Wairarapa Management Update**

Mr Teal gave brief overview of recent progress for Treaty Settlements for Kahungunu Wairarapa in that they were still clarifying the challenges to the mandate for negotiations.

Mr Teal noted that Wairarapa Moana governance group were finalising their briefing document to the proposed Statutory Reserve Board, which will provide a blueprint for continuity management direction. It was then agreed that

***A briefing paper from Wellington Fish & Game Council be developed with a view to presenting that to the proposed Statutory Reserve Board when it is established***

Malcolm Francis/Richard McIntyre

Carried

After discussion it was agreed to obtain all survey results from the fish removal project at Barton's Lagoon, and the research project at Matthew's Lagoon.

Dr Kavermann informed Council that he was presenting a paper at the Ecological Society Conference in December on the scientific rigour of data analysis and conclusions drawn from them in terms of the information published from Barton Lagoon fish removal project.

A request for a formal inquiry had been forwarded to the Department of Conservation for the project that resulted in the loss of several hundred mudfish – but a decision to proceed or not to proceed had not formally been undertaken.

It was then moved

***To receive the report on Lake Wairarapa Management Issues***

**Colin Shore /Jim Cook**

Carried

**22. Junior / Novice Participation**

Mr Teal confirmed that the Fish in Schools programme had essentially finished for the calendar year and had progressed well in all ten schools participating, and that most fish had been released (with authorisation) into local streams.

It was noted that Councillor Scott had successfully obtained funding on behalf of Manawatu Freshwater Anglers Club from NZCT, Pub Charities, and Palmerston North City Council for up to 750 fish for the Palmerston North Family Fish Out Day planned for 9-10 November.

Chairman Cotsilinis noted that there were some additional fish to be supplied to the Capital Trout Centre to make up for some material losses on the delivery in August.

Councillor Francis confirmed that Horowhenua/Kapiti Clubs will look at repeating the Otaki event in February 2020 and that funding applications for those clubs was pending.

It was then moved

***To receive the update on the junior novice participation programmes***

**Malcolm Francis/Aaron Passey**

Carried

**23. R3 Marketing Update**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the R3 Road Map prepared by consultant Steve Doughty which provided a guide of possible actions in R3 programmes.

Councillor Scott noted that the R3 programme needed to move along with more haste and specific actions, and there had been little or no contact with NZ Council staff and no specific action plan had been developed with Wellington F&GC. This hadn't been completed or progressed by NZC either before or after the commencement of the current fishing season (even with Mr Doughty's recent appointment as Business Development Manager). It was further noted that it was a nationally co-ordinated project but involves the implementation by regions who are ones that interact with the licence holders, and therefore should be well informed of NZ wide strategies at all stages.

During discussions Mr Carnachan was commended in being proactive in the absence of any other advice to develop Wellington region's marketing and communications plan which provided a clear list of potential actions that could be taken.

It was then moved

***that the report on Fish & Game R3 Marketing for Wellington region be received***

**Don Scott/Paul Shortis**

Carried

**24. Access Issues Update**

Mr Teal provide a brief update of access issues at sites listed, with active management for hunters required at several sites:

- Otaki River Mouth – no incidents reported – activity report completed
- Pencarrow lakes – no incidents reported – activity report completed
- Waitarere Forest – no incidents reported – activity report completed
- NZDF – suspension of access to land bordering the Rangitikei River including helicopter access . This had been due to part of a site-wide review of operational protocols and agreements. It is intended to inform the Walking Access Commission that the agreed access arrangements have potentially been reset to restrictive.

It was then moved

***That Council receive the Access Issues update report***

**Richard McIntyre/Colin Shore**

Carried

**25. Management Report - 1 August to 30 September 2019**

Clarification was sought on a number of matters:

- Confirming report on the otolith study on Ruamahanga River Catchment required finalisation by Cawthron Institute.
- That raw data would be sought on the recent survey of conservation matters of importance for the Waikanae 'Conservation Plan' to identify principal community values
- Dr Canning's work on the NPS FM and NES has been outstanding in providing quality scientific rigour to the process
- It was confirmed that Wellington F&GC had made a submission on the DoC biodiversity strategy being consistent with NZC submission but adding in regional examples.

It was then moved that

***The Management Report for the period 1 August to 30 September 2019 be received.***

Aaron Passey/Colin Shore

Carried

**26. Fish & Game Licence Sales**

Mr Teal referred to the summary in the project report documents noting that licence sales for fish were slightly up on previous year's sales (up 40 LEQs) and game licence sales were also slightly up (up 30 LEQs). This was seen as successful particularly in light of the challenges of dealing with uncertainty of firearms legislation changes.

It was moved that

***The report on Fish Licence Sales to 30 September 2019 and the report on Game Licence Sales to 31 August be received***

Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis

Carried

**27. Expenditure and Financial Report**

After brief discussion on confirming an expenditure item for habitat works on Lake Omanu, it was moved that

***Expenditure of up to \$2,300 be made on Lake Omanu habitat improvements from Reparation Reserve***

Paul Shortis/Don Scott

Carried

Chairman Cotsilinis provided an overview of the key financial reporting. It was noted that income for licence sales was higher for both Fish Licences and Game Licences.

After brief discussion it was moved

***That the Expenditure Report to 31 August 2019 and Financial Transactions for July and August 2019 be received***

**28. Correspondence/Media**

A media items were briefly discussed.

**29. Contribution Recognition**

The presentation of recognition awards was deferred as no recipients were available for this meeting.

Following discussion further nominations for potential recipients included: Neville Rush – for outstanding contribution to novice angler recruitment and management of the children’s fish out days at Capital Trout Centre.

**30. General Business**

Discussion ensued on the proposed Arms Amendment Bill which included provisions for a firearms registry, a database that allowed easier transfer of information from medical health professionals to NZ Police. Discussion focused on unintended consequences of proposed law changes – including an example of firearms owners being potentially reluctant to seeking help from GPs for mental wellness issues if they risk having their firearms licence revoked or come under scrutiny of police as a result. While it was recognised that a firearms registry could be effective in controlling ownership of firearms in overseas examples, it had to be put in the context of NZ’s situation where the unlicensed criminal sector already had considerable access to firearms that a firearms registry would not influence. The complexity of the firearms registry was noted, especially if you had to note a transfer of firearms if it is borrowed, or if a serial number is rubbed off. The functionality of a system was questioned, as was the potential police staff resourcing to manage a system. Discussions concluded that councillors remained unconvinced that it could be managed reliable and fit for purpose.

It was agreed that Wellington Fish and Game Council should indicate to NZ Council a clear and bold response to draft positions indicated, and that governors views would be sought via email. Once councillors’ views were collated, a submission from Wellington Fish & Game Council would be made to the Select Committee – noting that it should be relatively consistent with NZ Council’s submissions.

Considerable discussion ensued on the communications focus of NZ F&GC CE which was increasing the tensions between the rural community caused by the sustained approach now perceived as ‘industry bashing’. The issue was now impacting ‘on the ground’ with an increasing number of examples of loss of access; for anglers, for hunters, for fish and game staff undertaking

resource monitoring. It was also noted that there was an erosion of goodwill of licence holders who were also voicing their disapproval at the public positions that Fish & Game were taking on dealing with the farming community and not adequately representing their interests on firearm legislation reforms.

It was noted that on an issue by issue analysis it was likely that a justification would be provided, but the overall style of execution and tactics were not seen as helpful moving issues forward in sending the right message. The communications appear sporadic and alienating – with many examples provided of the negative public interpretations of messaging being provided by NZ Council staff.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to NZ Council to point out the concerns in the way the public awareness messages were being delivered, the messages being sent needing a strategic review, and the expectation that a communications plan would be furnished by August.

There was an issue about use of the licenceholders database (and ownership) recently by Otago F&GC – which arose from NZ Council sending out the questionnaire on licenceholder views on firearms legislation review. This was sent to both angling and hunting database, supposedly to get a holistic view and opinions from all licenceholders.

There were recent examples from more radical external animal rights groups advocating for ‘anti-farming’ actions in Southland. It was considered that Fish & Game did not want to be encouraging that attitude but instead looking a how to publicise positive gains in water management.

Councillor Cook noted that the farming community had a generally positive view of regional Fish & Game but the overriding opinion was dominated by NZ Council national messaging. Councillor Francis considered that there was damage occurring at a higher political level, when other organisations can be advocating on specific issues. He considered that Fish & Game needed to now be seen as working proactively with the farming community. Councillor McIntyre noted that the Rangitikei farming collective is providing education on farming practices and provides some good news stories to leverage from.

It was acknowledged that Fish and Game has established a meaningful debate and actions on development on freshwater management policy but strategically the organisation needs to consider how much longer it persists with negative targeting of farming community.

It was recognised that the water management issues had garnered enough public awareness and public support a couple of years ago, and there were other risks of importance to Fish & Game such as perceptions of trout and native fish interactions that the NZ Council had failed to co-ordinate policy on this threat. The recent Lindis Case decision which mentioned perceptions of valuing native fish habitat over trout habitat is a case in point.

Discussion continued on what a new public awareness campaign should be trying to achieve as an outcome – including developing allies for when the Indigenous Fish Act will be interpreted and implemented.

The recent example of fish deaths resulting from the intentional lowering of the dam was briefly discussed in context of public interest of both native fish and trout deaths. It was noted that GWRC were undertaking an investigation into the events leading to this outcome.

Chairman Cotsilinis noted that he would not be able to attend the Governors (Chairs)/NZ Council workshop on 23 November 2019 and sought interest in those able to attend. Councillor Cook indicated that he could be available to attend the Council meeting if it had been held in Wellington but was not available to attend a meeting in Christchurch.

After brief discussion it was moved that

***Richard McIntyre be Wellington Fish & Game Council's representative at the fish & Game Governors Meeting on 23 November 2019 in Christchurch.***

Strato Cotsilinis/Paul Shortis

Carried

The Governors meeting was intended to cover a wide range of topics including; governance issues, managing complaints on direction, a yet to be confirmed strategic planning workshop (for up to two hours) to provide governors with strategic insight and opportunity to feed ideas into, and a two hour session open for general discussion.

A letter from Southland Fish & Game Council to make an effort to hold regional budgets for next year and make voluntary efforts to reduce by 1% was briefly discussed. Councillor Shortis noted that the wider strategic finance review exercise being undertaken should consider these aspects as it was looking at: organisational efficiencies to hold licence fees and how regional reserves are generated, maintained, and used. Chairman Cotsilinis noted that the focus fifteen years ago core issues were on managing fish and game 'matters' but there was a requirement to be involved in the externally

driven resource management processes to manage for and protect hunters and anglers interests. It was recognised that until those processes abate then things will be financially tight and appropriate use of the reserves will be required.

Councillor Shortis also noted that the organisation doesn't allocate resources on where the licence sales are generated and/or where resources are located – with the initial staff resourcing based on angling patterns in 1990.

Chairman Cotsilinis acknowledged that he was unavailable for the next Council meeting in December and after brief discussion it was agreed that Councillor Francis would be Chair for that meeting.

Councillor Cook acknowledged the outstanding efforts and governance skills that Councillor Shortis was giving to the role of NZ Council appointee and representing the interests of licenceholders. [acclamation].

Councillor Passey noted that he had been potentially blocked from the Fish & Game NZ twitter feed.

There being no further general business the meeting was concluded at 8.34pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Hotel Coachman, 140 Fitzherbert Avenue, Palmerston North on 3 December 2019 at 3.00pm.

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

