

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 163rd MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW
ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 6th April 2017 AT 12.00PM**

Present

Murray Ferris, Lindsay Lyons, Laurance Tamati, Sandy Bull, Steve Scragg, David Woolner, Neal Hawes, Ken Coombes, Peter Storey, Alan Baird, and Barry Roderick (departed 2.00pm).

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson, John Meikle, Lynne Sands, Eben Herbert, Anthony van Dorp, Mark Sherburn, Lloyd Gledhill, and Matt Osborne (Eastern Fish & Game); Ray Dunlop (Wildfowlers Association); Ken Raureti (Bay Of Plenty Conservation Board, arrived 12.20pm).

1.0 WELCOME

Cr Murray Ferris opened the meeting at 12.00pm and welcomed Councillors, staff, and visitors.

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 Apologies were received from Cr Annaka Davis; Matt McDougall and Nigel Simpson (Eastern Fish & Game); Michel Dedual and Dave Conley (Department of Conservation); and Ray Bushell.

2.2 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/David Woolner) that the apologies for the 163rd meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [17/04/2.2]*

2.3 Cr Murray Ferris advised that he wished to defer the Public Excluded Session scheduled for this meeting to Council's next meeting. The purpose of this agenda item was to discuss Council's self appraisal of its performance but he had only recently received all appraisals back and they still needed to be collated and summarised. In addition to this he wanted to allocate additional time to licensing topics which had been received for comment from the National Office after the agenda had been set.

2.4 Cr Barry Roderick wished to acknowledge the commitment of Councillors' in relation to their attendance today, particularly those from the East Coast given the weather related road closures and diversions in place.

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (16 FEBRUARY 2017)

3.1 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/David Woolner) that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2017 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [17/04/3.1]*

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 Cr Lindsay Lyons requested an update regarding the Rangitaiki water quality issues. Matt Osborne advised that the Regional Council had recently met with Lochinver management onsite and established that substantial areas within the Lake Pouarua catchment had been planted in lucerne to support strip grazing by dairy cattle. They advised this was likely to be a key factor contributing to the degradation of the lake's water quality and the upper river, but noted that these were permitted activities under

the current Regional Water and Land Plan. The new owners of Lochinver Station are keen to do what they can to address what's happening, and have undertaken to work with the Regional Council to identify means of reducing downstream impacts. Discussion followed on the increasing prevalence of the "spray and pray" approach to pasture development on hill country, and the potential effects of this on waterways from runoff. Eben Herbert confirmed that strip grazing has been standard practice for some time, and the impacts of this had not been foreseen 10 years ago when the regional plan was put in place. He advised that the Regional Council would soon be releasing its new Water Quality Plan which would address strip grazing, and noted that Gisborne had already done so in its new plan.

- 5.2 Cr Barry Roderick asked about water quality in the Otamatea Stream and Dry Fly Creek. Matt Osborne advised that both were looking pretty good when he and Anthony van Dorp had visited the area recently, adding that Dry Fly Creek was in fact crystal clear. Council supported Cr Lindsay Lyons' suggestion of a field trip to the Otamatea/Otangimoana Streams later in the year as this would provide Council with greater insight into the emerging issues in the area.
- 5.3 Cr Barry Roderick requested that Item 9.4 in the February 2017 minutes relating to ballot holder involvement in the management of the balloted wetlands be put forward as a future agenda item. Andy Garrick advised that staff's intentions had been to include this in the August agenda.
- 5.4 Cr Barry Roderick also commented on Item 9.5 (bullet point 3) which was intended to record that Fish & Game only measures water clarity and water temperature during drift dives, but for Health and Safety reasons should also be looking into the status of other water quality related parameters e.g. coliforms and faecal contamination prior to conducting the dives. Cr Roderick questioned if we shouldn't also be sampling for nitrogen and other nutrients. Andy Garrick noted that staff collected water samples for Regional Council to conduct these tests from time to time but it was an expensive process (c.\$100/test?) and not something we typically budget for. A better option probably, would be to continue to liaise closely with Regional Council and lobby for regular or more intensive water sampling where we have ongoing concerns such as in the upper Rangitaiki. In terms of Health and Safety for staff undertaking drift dives the best and most timely thing we can probably do is to seek up to date *E.coli*/algal bloom status reports from the Regional Council immediately prior to the dives.
- 5.5 John Meikle updated Council on his investigations of Waikato River ramping levels and whether Mercury Energy was abiding by its consents. He advised that information he had obtained via an Official Information Act request to the Waikato Regional Council indicated that it was.
- 5.6 Cr Sandy Bull requested an update on access to the Putere lakes. Anthony van Dorp advised that the majority of the land around the larger lake was privately owned. He confirmed that there is currently an agreement for access with the owner, and that anglers needed to first make contact with the owner whose contact information is available in our latest access brochure. He advised that the people at the marae are also amenable to providing access and they just ask that anglers call in. Anthony also advised that there is a marginal strip around the other lake, and that DOC Gisborne was presently dealing with issues relating to access to that with the surrounding land owner. Anthony was confident that access would be restored there in due course.
- 5.7 Cr Steve Scragg advised that he had been receiving comments that access up the Mokau was poor. Anthony van Dorp advised that staff had been undertaking spawning counts in that area over the last couple of years and access appeared to have

been reasonable. Cr Sandy Bull advised that he would be heading up that way after Easter and would be happy to take a look and report back.

6.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

- Cr Steve Scragg - Past Councillor matter
- John Meikle - Display of 'museum' items
- Andy Garrick - Licensing matters - R Sowman mail out
- Cr Barry Roderick – Rachel Stewart's recent article¹
- Cr Alan Baird – Reporoa daily bag limits²

7.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

7.1 No conflicts of interest were identified.

8.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2017-2018 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

8.1 Andy Garrick advised that we were now into the second stage of the Operational Work Planning process where proposed projects/themes had been identified and external costs associated with these allocated, but with the proposed staff time component for various activities still to be confirmed. Andy provided a brief overview of the key changes to the OWP noting that this was presented as a balanced budget, and that projects that were unable to be implemented within the current bulk fund allocation would require contestable funding bids and the approval of Council to pursue these. Items raised and discussed briefly included proposed East Coast fisheries investigations, analysis and presentation of brood count data from drain surveys and opening day angling survey results, use of Back Country reserves for various works and the need to establish a policy on the use of these funds.

8.2 Andy Garrick described the three proposed Contestable Fund bids and provided some background to the reduction in staff time allocated to, and reimbursed by the Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council. Andy also provided some further detail around the need for security cameras within the office and the grounds, not only for the health and safety of staff, but also for the detection and deterrence of offences relating to infrastructure and hatchery operations in particular. Cr Steve Scragg queried whether staff use body cameras when dealing with compliance matters in the field. Anthony van Dorp confirmed that a camera is in use from time to time and that there is justification for acquiring more as these devices are a useful tool for de-escalating situations. Anthony informed Council that honorary rangers were not permitted to operate in high offending areas and staff were not permitted to attend callouts at certain times and in certain places on their own.

¹ Matter dealt with here – Cr Roderick noted Ms Stewart considered Fish & Game to be being the greatest environmental organisation.

² Matter dealt with here – Cr Baird highlighted some potential issues relating to the Reporoa restricted regulations, i.e. being it could be interpreted that you are able to shoot four mallards on one side of road and eight on the other for a total of 12 birds. Eben Herbert advised that the regulation was clear and if you take four on one side then you can only take four on the other for a total of 8 birds. His advice was that hunters in the area should be careful about being in possession of eight birds in the Reporoa restricted area and suggested that the extra four should be clearly labelled and that the hunters can clearly account for where they have obtained them from.

8.3 *Agreed (Peter Storey/Steve Scragg) that Council receives the draft budget and approves the proposed contestable funding bids for the 2017-2018 Operation Work Plan. [17/4/8.3]*

9.0 WAIKAREMOANA SPORTS FISH HABITAT ENHANCEMENT FUND

9.1 Council discussed previous and proposed applications for funding from the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund. Cr Murray Ferris queried whether the Waikaremoana Boating and Fishing Association had uplifted the funds approved this financial year for the replacement of navigation markers. Andy Garrick advised that two applications that had been approved from the fund were yet to be uplifted these being for the WBFA Navigation markers (\$12,000), and DOC Lagarosiphon related work (\$39,000).

9.2 Andy Garrick outlined two proposed applications to the fund for the 2017-18 year, one for ongoing monitoring which as originally programmed would after its third year be scaled down and expected to cost in the vicinity of \$12,000 next year (\$19,000 current year), and another for the purchase of a more sophisticated echo sounder for use on the lake, the need for which has become apparent after the recent issues experienced with the water quality monitoring buoy. Andy advised that further staff enquiries since the agenda had been produced indicated that the cost of the latter including installation would be in the vicinity of \$6,500, not \$5,000 as roughly estimated previously. The Australian agent for the sounder we were wishing to acquire was very keen to support Eastern Fish & Game and had offered to provide two sets of this equipment for the price of one. They were keen for Fish & Game to use the equipment to acquire and upload bathymetric and bottom profile data to a publically accessible domain as opportunity permitted for lakes within the region and Waikaremoana in particular. Council supported both of these applications and agreed that it would be appropriate to proceed with the purchase of the 3D sounder in this current financial year.

9.3 *Agreed (Sandy Bull/Steve Scragg) that Council approves \$6,500 funding from the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund for the purchase of a 3D mapping sounder in the current 2016-17 financial year. [17/04/9.3]*

9.4 *Agreed (Peter Storey/Ken Coombes) that Council approves up to \$12,000 to be drawn from the Waikaremoana Sports Fish Habitat Enhancement Fund for the reduced but ongoing survey and monitoring programme. [17/04/9.4]*

10.0 SPORTS FISHING REGULATIONS

10.1 Andy Garrick advised that this agenda item was the first in a series aimed at reviewing existing Sports Fishing Regulations with a view to simplifying these if it was possible to do so. No resolution or resolutions were required today. Council had indicated its support for reviewing various water ways at its bi-monthly meetings in preparation for the two yearly formal anglers notice review which would commence in February next year. Today's discussion focussed on Lake Tarawera regulations, and Matt Osborne initiated this with a power point presentation highlighting a number of options, the pros and cons of each, and matters needing to be considered.

10.2 Ken Raureti voiced concern in relation to an option to open Lake Tarawera all year round noting the importance of resting the lake for a period as currently occurs.

10.3 Cr Sandy Bull queried the level of conflict between anglers in fly/spin areas and the compatibility of these methods in the same area. Anthony van Dorp advised that staff rarely encountered issues in fly/spin areas involving anglers using these different methods, and most conflicts were between fly anglers and generally arose from selfish

or unethical behaviour on the part of one or both. Anthony believed that the methods could co-exist in most situations if anglers were educated in the etiquette of doing so. Furthermore spin fishers largely fished during daylight hours while fly fishers had close to exclusive access pre dawn and post nightfall.

- 10.4 Cr Neal Hawes suggested there was merit in closing the Te Wairoa stream mouth to all angling from 1 April to protect potential brood stock and remove confusion relating to the taking of hens only from this area, but it was noted by others that this would reduce opportunity for anglers. There appeared to be wide support for the suggestion that the regulation prohibiting the take of wild fish of 620mm length or more could be dropped, and general agreement around proposed wording changes to anchoring rules.
- 10.5 A map and brief overview of changes to regulations warranting further discussion next year based on this meeting's deliberations will be presented to Council at its next meeting in June.

11.0 SPECIES MONITORING

- 11.1 Council received the 2016 Executive Summary for the Rotorua Lakes Opening Day Survey Report.

12.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

12.1 Reports from other agencies

Bay of Plenty Conservation Board

Ken Raureti advised that black swan numbers in Tauranga Harbour remained a matter of concern for the Board, that silting in the harbour was a significant concern also, and that water quality was on the agenda at every meeting of the Board. Cr Alan Baird queried whether the silting of the harbour was from farm or forest? Ken advised that it was derived from both in addition to a number of other factors. Ken noted that the Whirinaki Forest Conservation Management Plan was about to be put out for public consultation and this had provisions relating to hunting, access, and water quality amongst other things. Ken spoke of the Police Trout Fishing Tournament and suggested that its data would be useful to tap into. He said the average fish size overall this year was 1.42kg, down from 1.57kg last year. Rotoiti was significantly down at 1.7kg from 2.12kg, while Okataina was 2.16kg versus 2.17kg last year.

12.2 Report from the New Zealand Council

Cr Lindsay Lyons advised that the New Zealand Council met for its 125th meeting in Christchurch. Lindsay advised that this had been and will continue to be a big year with the retirement of Bryce Johnson and the appointment of his replacement. He spoke briefly of issues that had arisen for another Fish & Game region which may have been avoided had a complaints procedure been in place. Lindsay said that this had resulted in a great deal of time and effort being imposed on all involved and suggested that this Council should be looking to establish a complaints committee and process to avoid situations such as this in the future. Cr Steve Scragg queried whether this could be something delegated to the Executive Committee and Cr Murray Ferris agreed. Lindsay then went on to comment on an application which was made to the NZ Council for funding for the North Canterbury hatchery, and a requirement for all applications to be made via the managers meetings for recommendation prior to approval being sought from the NZ Council. He advised that concerns relating to the sustainability and financial viability of that hatchery may result in an audit of all Fish & Game hatcheries including Eastern's. Lindsay spoke of issues in getting the guides licence through government, the Governance Forum scheduled for July 2018 being an

opportunity to introduce the new CEO (still to be appointed), and a 48 pound rainbow he had seen taken from a CSI canal on their field trip around the region. Cr Murray Ferris said it was timely to acknowledge and thank Lindsay for the time and effort that he puts into this role.


13.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

- 13.1 Andy Garrick commented briefly on the new Fish & Game website noting that while it looked very smart it currently fell well short of what we had been looking forward to seeing. It wasn't particularly user friendly and was full of typos, spelling errors, some of which to be fair had probably been carried over the previous website, and had links that either didn't work or went to the wrong place. Its likely to be a work in progress for some time putting these things right, and staff from Eastern and other regions were disappointed that it had been launched prior to being thoroughly checked over and the bugs ironed out.
- 13.2 Lindsay Lyons queried whether non residents, who pay a premium for their non resident licence, shouldn't automatically receive a copy of the Special Edition of the Fish & Game magazine or be able to tick a check box to pay say an additional \$5 for postage to receive it. John Meikle suggested that this may not be viable as he had recently posted a magazine to California at a cost of \$17.50. It was noted that the Special Edition of the magazine would ultimately be available for download on the new Fish & Game website which would overcome the issue.
- 13.3 Andy Garrick briefly spoke of concerns relating to notification of aerial 1080 operations. He noted that DOC had recently set up an interactive 1080 page on its website but this only provided information on its Battle for the Birds' operations and no one else's. Andy had scheduled a meeting with the North Island Operations Communications Manager for OSPRI (formerly TbFree NZ) and a Public Health Officer from the Ministry of Health to discuss ways in which consultation with Fish & Game and communication with licence holders could be improved, and would be promoting the concept of a 'one stop shop' website for DOC, OSPRI, Regional Councils and all other 1080 users.
- 13.4 *Agreed (Peter Storey/Ken Coombes) that the payments for January and February totalling \$390,256.15 be approved, and that Council receives the Health and Safety report, Management report, and Licence Sales report. [17/04/13.4]*
- 13.5 Kate Thompson followed up the Licence Sales report with a power point presentation of recent analyses she had undertaken of fish licence sales trends and the demographics of Eastern fish licence holders. Further analyses of this nature will be undertaken to provide insight into where marketing effort could most profitably be directed.

14.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

- 14.1 Council discussed Robert Sowman's paper on licensing and supported the conversion of a day licence to 4-6 hours and the addition of a premium to the non resident licence day licence to remain consistent with the non-resident season licence. Cr Ken Coombes suggested that the "Whole Season" licence name remain unchanged to avoid confusion. Comments were also made about loss of day licence sales through significant MSA requirements placed on trout fishing guides, and Rotorua being marketed as a cycling destination rather than a fishing one as it once was.

- 14.2 Cr Steve Scragg suggested that another attempt should be made to put forward the name of a former Eastern Fish and Game Councillor for a Queens Service Medal. Cr Murray Ferris advised he would follow up on this and establish what the procedure is.
- 14.3 John Meikle suggested to Council we could make the meeting room more reflective of game bird hunting and sports fish angling history. He asked Councillors if they knew of anyone who wished to donate or loan any items for display noting that while we were not in a position to purchase items we could at least acknowledge their donation or loan on the display.
- 14.4 The final item for the meeting was provided by Matt Osborne in the form of a power point presentation and commentary on their recent drift dive of various locations on the Motu River. Sandy Bull provided a brief history of the source of liberations for the Motu River advising that it had suffered dramatically from siltation over a long period. Sandy thanked staff for their work there with water quality monitoring and drift dives.
- 15.0 MEETING CLOSED**
- 15.1 The meeting was closed at 3.22pm.



.....
Murray Ferris,
Chairman

23/6/17
.....
Date

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

2.0 APOLOGIES

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