

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 165th MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT THE ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW
ZEALAND ON THURSDAY 10th AUGUST 2017 AT 12.00PM**

Present

Murray Ferris, Lindsay Lyons, David Woolner, Neal Hawes, Annaka Davis, Barry Roderick, and Steve Scragg (arrived 12.54pm).

IN ATTENDANCE

Andy Garrick, Kate Thompson, John Meikle, Matt McDougall, Eben Herbert, Anthony van Dorp, Lynne Sands, and Matt Osborne (Eastern Fish & Game); Peter Shepherd, Tom Scott-Simmonds (Department of Conservation, Taupo), Ross Mackay.

1.0 WELCOME

Cr Murray Ferris opened the meeting at 12.15pm. At this time the quorum requirement of seven Councillors had not been met but would be when Cr Steve Scragg arrived. Andy Garrick advised that Steve was on his way from Gisborne but had been delayed due to closure of the Waioeka Gorge. Cr Murray Ferris informed those present that the meeting would continue in the meantime with liaison officers reports being brought forward as no resolutions were required for these. He said the main agenda would be put on hold for 40 minutes as stipulated within the Standing Orders and that the usual order would resume following the arrival of the seventh Councillor, or business would be adjourned.

Murray welcomed Ross Mackay from the Hawke's Bay, and Pete Shepherd and Tom Scott-Simmonds from the Department of Conservation.

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 Apologies were received from Crs. Ken Coombes, Sandy Bull, Peter Storey and Alan Baird, and Steve Scragg had informed the manager that he would be delayed due to road closures; Helen Neale (Department of Conservation); Ken Raureti (Bay of Plenty Conservation Board); Mark Sherburn (Fish & Game); and Ray Bushell.

2.2 Apologies would be accepted once a quorum was present.

3.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

3.1 Report from the New Zealand Council

Cr Lindsay Lyons spoke on behalf of the New Zealand Fish and Game Council and provided an update on the recruitment of a new CEO to replace Bryce Johnson. He expected that an announcement would be able to be made either tomorrow (Friday 11 August) or on Monday 14th and outlined the release plan for this. Other matters Lindsay spoke to included;

- Bryce Johnson's recent meeting with Katie Milne of Federated Farmers.
- F&G needing to be future focussed in its Public Awareness, rather than reactive.
- The 2018 Fish and Game Council election process.
- Recent radio announcement by a DOC staff member describing trout as "ferrets of the waterways".

Referring to the new licence categories that had been introduced in 2015, Cr Annaka Davis queried what licence type was required to be eligible to vote and to stand for Council, and whether it was necessary to hold this licence type for the duration of the Council term? Lindsay advised that the New Zealand Council had resolved that the following licence categories would be eligible to vote or stand for Council in the upcoming election - Fish Adult Whole Season, Fish Local Area Adult, Fish Senior Loyal, Fish Family (but primary holder only) and Game Adult Whole Season. It was noted the current legislation refers to the holder of an "adult season licence" rather than a specific category, and that New Zealand Council Policy had in the past identified which categories sat under the "adult season" umbrella. It was also confirmed that a Councillor must hold the appropriate licence type for the duration of their term on Council.

Lindsay spoke of concern over falling licence sales and recruitment, particularly of those in the younger age groups. He felt that as an organisation we should be looking at ways to increase participation by youth, and highlighted opportunities that are currently available in Australia and the South Island for easy access fishing such as stocked fish out ponds and lakes. Discussion covered:

- Opportunities of this nature in the Eastern Region;
- Other avenues for introducing youth such as education in schools;
- Inability to release fish into areas not currently stocked;
- The success of recent Gisborne kids fishing at the Ngongotaha hatchery;
- Removing barriers such as complicated regulations;
- Feedback from staff attending the recent conference in Dunedin in relation to the 3 Rs (Recruitment, Retention, Reintroduction).

Lindsay advised that he wanted to introduce the idea of stocked fish out ponds to this Council as he was keen to put the concept on the table for discussion at the New Zealand Council.

4.0 Cr Steve Scragg arrived at 12.54pm which enabled continuation of the meeting and agenda as planned.

5.0 APOLOGIES

5.1 Apologies were received from Crs. Ken Coombes, Sandy Bull, Peter Storey, Alan Baird; Helen Neale (Department of Conservation); Ken Raureti (Bay of Plenty Conservation Board); Mark Sherburn (Fish & Game); and Ray Bushell.

5.2 *Agreed (Neal Hawes/Barry Roderick) that the apologies for the 165th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [17/08/5.2]*

6.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (15 JUNE 2017)

6.1 *Agreed (David Woolner/Lindsay Lyons) that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2017 be confirmed as a true and correct record subject to an amendment to resolution 17/06/10.6. Amended from "Council reaffirms its earlier intention" to "Council reaffirms its earlier policy". [17/08/6.1]*

7.0 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY

7.1 There were no items for inclusion in Council policy.

8.0 MATTERS ARISING

8.1 There were no matters arising.

9.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

9.1 No conflicts of interest were identified.

10.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

10.1 Defibrillator – Cr Barry Roderick

Cr Barry Roderick expanded on what he wished to raise, this being that Council consider looking into the purchase of a defibrillator for the Fish & Game site noting the number of people that visit here each year and use its facilities. Andy Garrick suggested it was unlikely that anyone would disagree to the concept of having a defibrillator on site, and noted that while there was no provision within this or next year's OWP to purchase a unit, it may be possible to obtain funding externally and staff would look into this.

11.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2017-2018 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

11.1 Andy Garrick provided a brief overview of the process for the 2017-18 OWP since the previous meeting and provided details of the two submissions received which had been included in the August Papers for Information. Andy noted that most of the points raised in the submissions were of a general nature or proposed actions that were already provided for in the OWP, the exception being a suggestion that we should approach Landcorp and other large runholders and compile a register of landowners sympathetic to making their properties available for upland game hunting. Andy suggested that prior to doing this Fish & Game needed to develop relationships with landowners rather than cold calling them and requesting access for licence holders.

11.2 Andy also informed Council that the Eastern bulk fund as recorded within the final draft of the Operational Work Plan may need to be increased by \$3,000 being an amount allocated for Northland Region's aerial transect mallard counts. In the past two operational years these funds had been incorporated into the Eastern bulk fund but Andy felt it was timely and more appropriate to have funds for this ongoing project allocated to the region in which the project was being undertaken. He was awaiting clarification on whether this transfer had been made through the National budgeting process, but wished to highlight that if this had not occurred or couldn't be done this year the budget would need to remain within the Eastern Region bulk fund for a further year and payments made as required on behalf of Northland Region.

11.3 *Agreed (David Woolner/Neal Hawes) that Council approves the Operational Work Plan and budget for the 2017-2018 year. [17/08/11.3]*

11.4 *Agreed (David Woolner/Neal Hawes) that Council delegate authority to the Regional Manager to approve expenditure during the year as set out in the Council approved Operational Work Plan and budget. [17/08/11.4]*

12.0 HABITAT MAINTENANCE IN WETLAND RESERVES

12.1 Andy Garrick informed Council that Health and Safety was a key driver needing to be taken into account in resolving the best approach to undertaking annual maintenance requirements in Fish & Game managed wetlands, and we need to review whether our expectations of ballot holders are still appropriate. Council discussed its potential liability when we ask unpaid volunteers to undertake certain works as a condition of

ballot, and whether that liability is removed if they are not explicitly instructed or required to do so? Andy Garrick suggested that might well reduce our duty of care and liabilities, but this approach is less likely to result in annual and/or essential maintenance tasks being undertaken to the standard required if at all, as not all ballot holders put in the same amount of effort as others, and quality of job varies considerably even with the current approach. Andy confirmed that the current budget we put aside for habitat maintenance in reserves falls well short of what is needed if Fish & Game was to undertake the work itself or contract it out, and provided an overview of the possible options to fund this as detailed in the agenda item. Council discussion covered:

- the number of stands and ballot holders that costs could be spread over;
- retaining an option for ballot holders to pay for additional works should they wish to do so;
- the cost to maintain a maimai in general;
- the makeup of balloted stands e.g. dad and kids;
- the need to review the level of funding required as annual requirements and costs likely to be variable;
- working bees not viable due to the level of staff involvement required to coordinate these for all of the reserves in our region;
- the extent of churn within the ballot and number of stand holders who pull out after only a year or so;
- the extent to which maintenance requirements vary from one stand to another;
- the inability of many hunters to distinguish between what is a weed and what is a desirable plant species that shouldn't be removed;
- funding from contestable fund and resulting increase across all licence fees.

12.2 After considerable discussion Council agreed that the most appropriate solution was to introduce an annual Habitat Management Contribution fee for those using balloted stands within Fish & Game reserves which would be used to cover the costs of employing short term staff appropriately qualified and experienced to undertake all of the weed spraying and physical maintenance works required. Maimai maintenance would at this stage continue to be the responsibility of the stand holders. The fee would be applied to each of the hunters holding the stand. Council discussed what it might be fair to charge ballot holders, and there was general agreement that subject to the sum required to undertake the works needing to be done, a fee in the order of \$30 per adult per year with a lesser amount for juniors would not be unreasonable. Councillors noted that this is likely to be less than what it would cost many ballot holders to undertake the annual maintenance activities expected of them if mileage, herbicides and other expenses are taken into account for each trip they make to work on their stand and surrounds. Council noted that some ballot holders might want, or be prepared to pay for additional work to be undertaken, and the option should be open for hunters to arrange for this in consultation with staff. Council concluded that staff should determine what the annual fee should be, and Andy suggested it would be appropriate for the sum proposed each year to be reviewed by Council in advance of the balloting process.

12.3 *Agreed (Barry Roderick/Lindsay Lyons) that Council supports the concept of a levy on ballot holders for maintenance required in Fish & Game managed wetlands. [17/08/12.3]*

- 12.4** *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/David Woolner) that Council agrees that the levy on ballot holders for maintenance in Fish & Game managed wetlands shall be a scaled charge for Adult, Junior, and Child licence categories, and that staff will determine the appropriate fee for each. [17/08/12.4]*
- 12.5 Andy Garrick confirmed that staff would develop a proposal endeavouring to minimise cost to ballot holders and suggested that this should be reviewed by Council or brought to its attention annually.
- 13.0** **DEFINING BACK COUNTRY FISHERIES**
- 13.1 Cr Murray Ferris suggested that the “Back Country” title did not really define all waters that could potentially benefit from the non-resident licence levy in Eastern Region. Andy Garrick noted that this title was coined early on when the levy was first approved, and outlined the three criteria for qualifying waters set out in a more recent resolution (July 2014) by the New Zealand Council. This resolution makes it clear there is considerable flexibility when it comes to defining what is a “back country fishery”, and there is probably a much better term for categorising these. Andy suggested that before staff and Council start identifying waters and fisheries in the Eastern Region we intuitively think might qualify for this status, we should first identify the attributes that we consider a “back country fishery” should have, and the criteria we are going to use to distinguish them.
- 13.2 Council broke for five minutes at 2.00pm.
- 13.3 Matt Osborne presented via power point some of the results of a study entitled an “Analysis of the Recreational Freshwater Angling Behaviour of Overseas Tourists to NZ” completed by Stuart Hayes and Brent Lovelock for Otago Fish & Game. Data from the 2014-15 National Anglers Survey (NAS) had been utilised and features important to non-resident anglers quantified. These formed the basis for identifying the key attributes that could be used to define “Back Country Fisheries”. Matt proposed that numerical values be assigned to each attribute and a matrix approach used to rank waterways with those scoring above a certain threshold being deemed to be the region’s “Back Country Fisheries”.
- 13.4 Council discussion followed covering:
- consideration needs to be given not only to what’s important to the non-resident angler, but what is important to or would benefit resident anglers as well;
 - what the funds could be directed towards, e.g. baseline surveys, monitoring, research, promotion, compliance, back country licensing/administration;
 - possibility of having to limit number of anglers accessing some of waterways;
 - benefits of labelling waters as “back country sensitive fisheries” should they come under threat;
 - whether the key purpose of the levy is improve angler experience or protect sensitive fisheries?
- 13.5 Cr Barry Roderick proposed that Council agree to the matrix approach to rank waterways within the Eastern Region as suggested by staff, and that the key attributes presented be used. Council supported this course of action and Andy Garrick advised that staff would develop this further and bring it back to Council.

14.0 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SPORTS FISHING

14.1 Council considered the draft Code of Conduct for sports fishing developed by Helen Trotter from Otago Fish & Game, and Cr Neal Hawes commented that he thought that she had done a brilliant job and he supported it whole heartedly. Cr David Woolner provided some useful feedback on a number of points including the need to remove the term “ethical” and other related statements that are opinions rather than matters of code or conduct; the wording relating to taking no more than enough for and angler’s immediate needs; “requiring” participation; and the wording concerned with being safety conscious. Andy Garrick asked David if he could set these comments out in an email to him so he could forward his feedback to the New Zealand Council.

15.0 SPECIES MONITORING REPORTS

15.1 The full reports were provided within the August Papers for Information.

15.2 *Agreed (Steve Scragg/Murray Ferris) that Council receives the 2017 Paradise Shelduck and Black Swan Trend Counts Report and the 2017 Aerial Transect Counts of Mallard and Grey Duck Report. [17/08/15.2]*

16.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS CONT...

16.1 Reports from other agencies

Tongariro-Taupo Conservation Board

Cr Annaka Davis advised that the Board had not met since the previous meeting of Council so she had little to report at this stage.

Department of Conservation, Taupo

Tom Scott-Simmonds spoke on behalf of the Taupo fisheries team introducing himself and providing Council with an update on the Taupo fishery. He said that recent surveys had returned some very good condition fish with rainbows seeing an increase in body weight of 30% and browns 35%. These results had been attributed to good growing conditions in the lake with smelt surveys in April and November showing good populations. Cr Annaka Davis who fishes Taupo frequently agreed that there were more smelt evident and asked whether this was likely to continue? Tom advised that the lake is cyclical and that they are encouraging anglers to take more. He said that it was too early to see any results from regulation changes that had been implemented this season. Cr Lindsay Lyons wanted to acknowledge and thank the DOC staff for their attendance at the Eastern Council meetings noting that only four Fish & Game regions had DOC representation at their meetings.

17.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

17.1 Cr Barry Roderick’s item for General Business had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

18.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

18.1 Cr Barry Roderick queried the delay in getting the Waikaremoana water quality monitoring buoy operational and back in the water. Andy Garrick advised that staff were waiting on a quote from Waikato University and that this was taking some time to obtain. Cr Steve Scragg added that recently the water had appeared to be dirty.

18.2 Cr Steve Scragg asked whether the new boat electronics had been installed yet. Andy confirmed that the equipment had been installed and staff now needed to become familiar with its operation.

18.3 Cr Barry Roderick was concerned that the datawatch returns were reporting to be 30% down on previous years and queried staff on why this might be occurring? Cr Neal

Hawes queried survivability? Andy Garrick said that our handling of liberations was unchanged so if survivability was a factor this could be affected by environmental conditions. Matt Osborne also suggested that this year's weather may have contributed with reduced angler effort and reduce catch rates. Cooler weather meant no real thermocline in the larger lakes and reduced numbers of fish stacking at cold water inlets to the shallower lakes such as Lake Rotorua. He also commented on bulk tag returns affecting the results as some anglers saved their tags for up to two years before sending them in all at once.

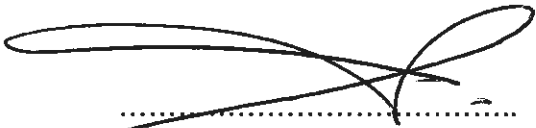
- 18.4 Cr Barry Roderick commented on water quality at Lake Tarawera and what was happening there, and Andy Garrick noted that \$6.5 million had just been pledged from the Government's Freshwater Improvement Fund towards assisting with reticulated sewerage for the lakeside community.
- 18.5 Cr Barry Roderick was pleased to see the linking of weather data to licence sales within the licence sales report which had provided an interesting aspect.
- 18.6 *Agreed (Steve Scragg/Neal Hawes) that Council receives the Management, Health and Safety, Finance, and Licence Sales reports and approves the payments for May and June 2017 totalling \$339,347,78. [17/08/18.6]*

19.0 OCTOBER MEETING VENUE

- 19.1 Andy Garrick reminded Council that the October meeting of Council would be held in Tauranga and the venue for this would be advised in due course.

20.0 MEETING CLOSED

- 20.1 The meeting was closed at 3.03pm.



.....
Murray Ferris,
Chairman

13-11-2017
.....
Date

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

5.0 APOLOGIES

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