

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton, on Saturday 15 October 2016 commencing at 11a.m.

AGENDA

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2. Possible conflicts of interest arising from meeting agenda	
3. Minutes of previous meetings held on 20 th August 2016 *	1
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5. Council correspondence (nil as of 3/10/2016)	
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* Denotes attachments

M. Young
Chairman
3/10/2016

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton,
on Saturday 20 August 2016 commencing at 11.00am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: M. Young.

Councillors: G. Annan, C. Carey, D. Cocks, W. Howard, N. Juby, A. Kerr, P. Shaw,
C. Sherrard, B. Smith, E. Williamson.

Staff: B. Wilson, J. Dyer, A. Daniel.

Visitors: M. Paviaur (DoC).

1. APOLOGIES

S. Smith, D. Klee, B. Smith (for lateness).

It was moved;

that the apologies be accepted.

Kerr/Sherrard CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 18 JUNE 2016:

It was moved;

that the minutes of the previous meeting of 18 June 2016 be accepted as a true and correct record.

Cocks/Annan CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

5. CORRESPONDENCE:

Nil.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

Councillor Annan stressed the advantages of using woollen carpets for riparian plantings, noting that the use of carpet considerably reduced long-term maintenance and weed management.

Mr Wilson updated on the Wallace Corp appeal to the Environment Court, with a successful resolution likely and the appeal being withdrawn. Councillor Juby congratulated staff on their success with the AFFCO and Wallace Corp appeals.

Councillor Kerr asked about the recent swan cull by the Auckland Airport Authority and whether alternative control methods were being considered. Mr Wilson replied that the Authority was putting considerable resources in looking at alternative methods but with little success. The fundamental issue was that improvements in water quality in the Manukau Harbour had led to a huge increase in eel grass near the airport providing good swan habitat. Some discussion followed on enhancing swan habitat in Lake Whangape. It was recognised that the restoration of the lower Waikato lakes was a priority with the Waikato River Authority.

Councillor Annan inquired about the wetland restoration project in the upper Mangatutu Stream catchment. Dr Daniel replied that he had been working with the landowner on the project and that an assessment would soon be made as to whether consents were required.

Councillor B. Smith joined the meeting at 11.10am.

Mr Wilson summarised the financial statements noting that there had been extensive interest in the Environmental Officer vacancy.

It was moved;

that the CE Bimonthly report and Financial Statements be accepted.

Annan/Cocks CARRIED

7. BAN ON THE USE OF LEAD SHOT:

Councillors discussed the letter from the Minister of Conservation on the use of lead shot near waterways with a wide range of views expressed.

It was moved;

that Council agrees that the review of the sub-gauge exemption for the use of lead shot could be moved forward but that there should be no change in the regulations for the 2017 season due to the potential impact on importers and retailers.

Annan/B. Smith CARRIED

8. RE-APPROVAL OF 2016/17 BUDGET AND OWP:

Mr Wilson stated that the budget and OWP had been updated to take into consideration the appointment of an Environmental Officer.

It was moved:

that the 2016/17 Operational Work Plan and Budget of \$782,339 be approved.

Cocks/B. Smith CARRIED

9. FUNCTIONS FOR SOP TREATMENT:

After brief discussion it was moved;

that Council accepts the staff recommendations for functions for SOP treatment.
Annan/Sherrard CARRIED

10. PREPARATION OF AN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY:

Councillors discussed the report by Phil Teal (Wellington F&G) and Niall Watson (Otago F&G) regarding a draft RM Strategy.

Councillors expressed their concern regarding the public awareness section of the report emphasising that they did not want to see a revival of the “dirty dairy” campaign due to its divisive impact with the rural community, while stressing the success in the Auckland/Waikato Region of Fish & Game being actively involved in the RMA process.

It was moved;

that Council supported the draft RM Strategy except for Objective 2 – public awareness, communications and advocacy

Williamson/Cocks CARRIED

11. 2015 REGIONAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS:

Councillors discussed the report by Warwick Lampp (Returning Officer) but rejected his suggestions for improvements to the election process due to concerns over the increased costs and the impact on candidates who did not have access to MS Word.

Councillor Cocks reminded the meeting that Council had previously agreed that the online licence purchasing form should include a compulsory field for participating in the voting process.

It was moved;

that the Returning Officer's recommendations are rejected. The on-line licence purchasing form should include a compulsory field where licence-holders must either opt-in or opt-out of participating in the voting process.

Cocks/Annan CARRIED

12. LAND OCCUPIER LICENCE TO FISH OR HUNT:

Councillors discussed the paper on “Land occupier licence to fish and hunt” prepared by Glenn Maclean (Taranaki F&G) and Robert Sowman.

Concern was expressed that landowners would see a free licence as the “thin end of the edge” towards a compulsory full licence. Nevertheless councillors recognised the management and research value of landowner licencing.

It was moved;

that Council supports in principle the concept of landowner licencing.

Cocks/Williamson CARRIED

The meeting rose for lunch at 12.30pm and resumed at 1.20pm

13. ANGLING ETHICS – CATCH & RELEASE:

Councillors discussed the paper prepared by Andy Harris (West Coast F&G councillor) on angling ethics, especially catch-and-release.

Councillor Juby recommended that the 6 fish limit should only refer to fish over a certain size (40cm) given that there were fisheries in the Auckland/Waikato region where it was possible to catch very high numbers of small trout. For example, some of the spring-fed rivers had well over a thousand fish per kilometre, mainly in the 20-40cm range. He also emphasised that fish handling skills were important as was water temperature.

It was moved;

that Fish & Game should develop a policy on the ethics of catch and release fishing but that such a policy should take into consideration the impact of high water temperatures, handling skills, and the voluntary limit should only be for large trout and/or specific waterbodies.

Howard/Sherrard CARRIED

14. OSH REPORT:

Mr Wilson introduced his OSH report. Discussion followed on stab vests with staff noting their value in ranging in potentially volatile areas such as the Waikato hydro-lake dams.

It was moved;

that the OSH Report for August 2016 be accepted.

Howard/B. Smith CARRIED

15. COUNCILLOR FIELD TRIP:

The Chairman spoke on his recommendation that Council should have a field trip in conjunction with a council meeting in 2017. He suggested sometime in winter with a visit to the Williamson Wetland. Councillor Sherrard suggested that the Huntly Gun Club would be a suitable venue for the council meeting.

It was agreed that the field trip should be an agenda item for the October 2016 meeting of Council. Councillors agreed to consider options for the venue, destination, and whether it should be a one or two-day event.

16. WASP RESEARCH:

Mr Wilson introduced his paper on wasp research that was requested by councillors at the June 2016 meeting and noted that the issue had been discussed at the recent regional F&G manager's meeting. The regional managers had agreed to provide a letter of support for Landcare Research to MPI and relevant Ministers.

14. NZF&G COUNCIL MEETING 22-23 JULY 2016:

Councillor Sherrard introduced the minutes from the recent NZF&G Council meeting. Discussion continued on the lead shot issue especially the impact of a ban on junior shooters using 410 gauge shotguns.

15. GENERAL BUSINESS:

Councillor Shaw asked for clarification on riparian rights and legal ownership of river margins. In reply Mr Wilson observed that it varied considerably between properties and was usually dependent on whether the land had been purchased from iwi by the Crown or private developers. In the latter case the riverbed usually remained in private ownership. But if it had been in Crown ownership then there was usually a road reserve or esplanade reserve ("Queen's chain"). Councillor Sherrard informed that land tenure alongside rivers was clearly shown on the WAMS website.

Mr Wilson raised the issue of temporary maimai tags and the opinion (previously distributed to councillors) from Council's legal adviser, Bruce Stainton that an expiry date on tags had no legal basis. Councillors expressed their frustrations over the issue with it noted that there was no obvious solution given the restrictions imposed by the Wildlife Act and the trend away from paper licences.

Councillor Juby asked whether councillors could receive both the *Both barrels* and *Reel life* newsletters. Mr Wilson replied that anyone could sign up for the newsletters on the Fish & Game website and that you didn't need to be a licence-holder.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 2.16 pm.

Bi Monthly Managers Report

Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Meeting October 2016

OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT**Project 1111 Drift diving:**

Adam has completed the reports for the Awakino and Waihou drift dives 2015-16 summer.

Project 1112 Banding

The last of the Gamebird Harvest Surveys asks the questions; “did you get a band this season?” and “did you report it?” It has been very concerning that many hunters “meant to get around to it”, but failed for a whole variety of reasons. How do we fix this? One thing hunters can do is to make quite sure that they report their own band/s. Many times they have told us “Bob” took all the bands and “he always reports them”. Well, on following this up, he didn’t! Likewise several hunters said they “sent them to the address on the band”. However DoC never received them. This can happen if someone sends the whole band un-flattened. In the mail sorting process the band ends up pushed out of the envelope and onto the mailroom floor as 5 did this year. Much better is to simply ring 0800 BIRD BAND with the exact band number and details of where shot, when and by whom. On a mobile there and then it’s sorted.

Banding and Harvest Data: The draft report to accompany remits will be circulated in advance of the next meeting. A number of remits have been received and will be incorporated into a discussion and recommendations paper for the setting of the 2017 regulations.

Band Reporting Rate: In the past 7 years we have run a verification process in order to determine band reporting rate from hunters. In some years the actual reporting rate appears to be much lower than what hunters indicate during the harvest surveys. It is important to know whether or not reporting rate is fluctuating in order to get accurate population trends using the Linken Peterson method. David Klee is looking at putting together a proposal to the national research committee to establish a reward scheme in order to accurately determine reporting rate.

Project 1114 Shoveler

It was noticeable this year that a number of the drakes at Watercare-Mangere had snow white breasts speckled in black, whereas others had ruddy-red coloured chests speckled in black. There has been speculation that the latter are Australian birds, though there is no banding confirmation of such journeys. Dr Murray Williams recently published an article in Notornis and notes that, “Historically NZ’s shoveler population has been differentiated taxonomically from shoveler in Australia based on plumage differences..., especially facial and breast patterns and colours of males. Misunderstanding of the progressive and variable development of male nuptial plumage lays at the heart of this confusion”, (*abridged*). So it would seem these birds are probably all “made in New Zealand”.

Dabchicks: Ornithological Society members help us with this count and are planning their own national dabchick count. Hopefully we can reciprocate. An article has been drawn up

along with a good photo of a pair of dabchicks, reminding hunters that they are an Absolutely Protected Species.

Project 1117 Gamebird Research

PhD Project Mallard Productivity: Jenn Sheppard is back in the country and continuing to work hard on the data analysis for the telemetry project.

Masters Project Heavy Metal Concentrations: A sub-sample of liver tissue has been dispatched to the lab in order to determine whether metals other than lead that bio-accumulate in organs warrant further investigation.

Shoveler Study: Counts were conducted by staff as part of the annual national survey. Matt McDougal in Eastern collates the data and produces a report. The population appear to be stable over the past 17 years. Short term (2015-2016) the population may have decreased. The 2016 total count for sites that have been counted every year ($n=82$) was 90% of the average for the period 2000 – 2015 and was down 26% on last year's count.

Project 1121 Fish Harvest Assessment:

Adam Daniel has made four trips to remove angler use cameras and hopes to complete the final two trips to finish the field component of the project in early October.

Project 1162 Gamebird Releases:

A new Upland Game Property with Special Conditions has been inspected by John Dyer. The property easily meets our criteria with many fenced and planted gullies, compared to some others farms in the wider area which are barren of any such features.

OUTPUT 2 HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

Project 1211 R.M.A.

Healthy Rivers Plan change for the Waikato catchment: Adam attended the Waikato Regional Council meeting where the council voted on the Healthy Rivers plan change for the Waikato and Waipa catchments. The plan change has some serious issues and will require significant time for submissions. The proposed plan change will be notified in early October.

Wallace Corporation: At the time of writing we have received the final set of agreed conditions and consent order for signing for the discharge from the Wallace Corp Meatworks into the Waitoa River. In the end, the conditions accepted by Wallace Corp will require very similar nutrient reductions as those imposed by the commissioners at the hearing and as requested by ourselves. They will be required to make large nutrient reductions compared to their previous consent limits as well as further ongoing reductions over the duration of the consent. We are not sure exactly why Wallace corp. changed their direction and accepted the much greater reductions that will require treatment upgrades. We were previously told that these reductions were unachievable and the change in stance does appear to coincide with the hiring of a new consultancy, one of whose directors sat as an independent commissioner on the AFFCO hearing.

Tatua: This was a consent application that David originally submitted on some four years ago and has finally been resolved. Tatua have signed up to conducting major treatment upgrades and changes to their land disposal systems to lessen the impact on surface water. We also managed to negotiate the inclusion of conditions requiring the implementation of a \$250k riparian management plan and a 5m minimum riparian setback for any perennial waterways on Tatua owned land that is being utilised for disposal. This was done without going to hearing but the precedent that Wallace Corp and AFFCO have set should not be underestimated in reaching negotiated outcomes for these cases.

Lake Waikare/Whangamarino Flood Scheme: David and Sarah Ongley (legal adviser) attended a further meeting with DOC and ICM, we have subsequently given feedback on the sediment work plan – Phase 2. The specific objective of the phase 2 investigation is to undertake detailed assessment of the identified options to reduce sediment deposition in Whangamarino Wetland due to the NOCG discharge.

Inghams application: This application has now been lodged and we will likely be submitting in opposition. Much like Wallace Corp, OCD and Tatua, the application in its current form seeks to increase some contaminant loading into the Firth of Thames catchment. It is hoped that we can get similar outcomes as we have in those aforementioned cases without proceeding to a hearing.

Whangamarino Weir: David and I met with Ray Scrimgeour and Lucy Roberts (DOC) to discuss the Whangamarino Weir, for which we jointly hold consent. The latest audit report has highlighted some non-compliance issues relating to the monitoring that needs to be addressed. A monitoring plan has been drafted and will be provided to the Regional Council. There may be some costs associated with the implementation of this plan in the future.

Project 1221 Council Land

Williamson Wetland: David organised a day to meet users on the Williamson Wetland and has helped establish a predator control programme which includes a roster system and reporting spreadsheet in order to monitor the control efforts and success. We had a good turnout at short notice and there appears to be a motivated group of hunters willing to put time and effort into the block.

Blythen Block: The foot bridge in the Blythen Block is very rarely called upon, except when the adjoining Mill Creek is well up and the usual track-crossing is flooded. After 17 years in use the macrocarpa sleepers have started to deteriorate and are due for replacement this summer. The supporting structure itself is treated pine and seems to be quite sound.

North & Central Shepherd: A spraying contractor has been booked to spray the yellow flag iris in the south-west corner of the North-Shepherd Wetland. At present this is under water, but spraying will take place as soon as this clears.

Piggott Block: Landcare Research are breeding three different types of South American beetle which have been approved for release to control Tradescantia, (Wandering Willy). The Piggott Block under the kahikatea stands contains many hectares of this weed in a dense sward. We have offered this block as a trial site and an inspection by Landcare staff is scheduled. This plant smothers native seedlings but it also causes a contact dermatitis on dogs, leaving them scratching for weeks afterwards. If these beetles can control this weed, gundogs the length of NZ will rejoice as much as any gardener.

F&G have applied to the Small Scale Community Initiatives Fund on behalf of the Piggott Block Users Group, for funding for traps and lures to control vermin in this block. If other hunter groups are interested, please approach staff and we'll do the rest. The results on the Blythen Block, in particular, are a credit to those who share the trap roster.

Weed spraying activities: I met with Waikato Regional Council staff to discuss Fish & Game's weed spraying activities in the lower Waikato. I've informed the WRC that over water we're only using Roundup so I don't see any issues.

Project 1231 Non Council Land

Game Bird Habitat Trust: Staff conducted referee inspections of GBHT projects 5 years post completion to ensure the projects were still realising the benefits which were envisaged when the applications were lodged.

NZTA Wetlands: A section 127 (RMA) variation has been lodged by the contractors with WRC which will allow a site other than Fisher Road to be used for the wetland mitigation package that F&G settled on for the Huntly bypass. We will meet with the works supervisors in the coming month to start planning for the Evans Road wetland which will be constructed this summer.

Giant Reed: Landcare Research has asked us about the locations of Giant Reed. Staff have responded with numerous examples.

Dumped Cars: The two car bodies at Makarau Creek boat ramp have finally been removed, meaning there is now more room for hunters to park their cars and boat trailers in this area. The car beside "the Humpback Bridge" off Falls Road has also now gone after pressure on local Council to do so.

Fanwort: F&G were alerted to a new water-weed in NZ called Fanwort (Cabomba) that has taken over some storm-water ponds in West Auckland. Our inspection of the wider area suggests it has yet to break out into nearby ponds. This plant continues to be sold on Trade-Me, (though perhaps not for much longer), as an aquarium plant that can be sent anywhere in NZ. These ponds are set for a full eradication programme by NIWA, MPI and the Auckland Council.

Project 1235 Trees

Sixty-eight Water oaks (aka: "Duck Oak"/*Quercus nigra*), distributed. Thanks to Hamilton F&G who grew them from collected seed.

OUTPUT 3 PARTICIPATION

Project 1311 Access Negotiation

Adam has finished and submitted 148 access points to WAMS complete with links to the regulations, fishing information specific to the location and river level information where available. The points will be displayed on WAMS and the Fish & Game site.

Project 1331 Magazine/Supplement

The annual pre-fishing season newsletter has been completed and sent out to licence-holders. Thanks to Councillor Nigel Juby for his assistance.

Project 1341 Other Publications

Adam has been contributing to *Reel Life*, while John has continued to produce *Both Barrels*.

OUTPUT 4 PUBLIC INTERFACE

Project 1441 Displays Promotions

Predator Competition: The Hunting & Fishing “Swamp Comp” competition is on again for 2016 and stoat, ferret and weasel tails can be taken into Hunting & Fishing stores in November to be eligible for multiple prizes. To promote and encourage this we have put details about it in *Both Barrels*. This included a photo of retiring CEO Andy Tannock with a trapped ferret, kindly arranged for us by H&F HO.

OUTPUT 5 LAW ENFORCEMENT

Project 1531 Legal

Hearing Murtagh: Mr Murtagh, through his counsel entered guilty pleas to both charges of hunting without a licence and hunting with an unplugged gun. His counsel sought another date be set down for sentencing as she indicated to the judge the defendant wanted to make an application opposing forfeiture of the gun.

OUTPUT 8: PLANNING REPORTING

Project 1841 National Liaison

Adam has been involved in commenting on the recent push to bring back felt-sole wading boots. Recent research has suggested that didymo can not become established in the North Island because it prefers waters that have very low levels of phosphorus. By comparison most North Island rivers are fed from volcanic soils and thus have phosphorus levels too high for didymo. Consequently some anglers are requesting that F&G removes its ban of felt-sole wading boots. Our current stance is:

- The phosphorus limitation paper was not conclusive with only one brand of fertiliser reducing didymo.
- Even if the report was conclusive didymo is not the only invasive species that can be carried by felt-sole wading boots.

OUTPUT 9: ADMINISTRATION

Project 1900 Administration:

The new F&G boat has been surveyed and is now operational. With a 30hp outboard, the lakes seem to have shrunk.

B. Wilson
Chief Executive.