

CENTRAL SOUTH ISLAND FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of Central South Island Fish and Game Council held in the Boardroom, 32 Richard Pearse Drive, Temuka, on Thursday 16 February 2017 at 7:00 pm.

Present: J Cruden L Koevoet
B Growcott G Rooney (Chairman)
M Hall B Whipp
D Isbister J Henry (Ngai Tahu)

In Attendance:

Staff: J Graybill (Chief Executive), B Dolan, A Christensen, J Couper, M Webb, H Stevens, R Adams and approximately 35-40 members of the public (majority were Rangitata hut-holders and anglers).

17-001 APOLOGIES:

P McLauchlan, Will Spry and D Winterburn (DoC)

AGREED that the apologies of P McLauchlan, W Spry and D Winterburn be accepted.

17-002 COUNCILLOR INTEREST REGISTER:

Chairman queried if Councillors had any new interests to add to the register. No changes were advised.

17-003 GENERAL BUSINESS:

- Way forward for the salmon fishery (MH)

17-004 HEALTH & SAFETY:

Exit points of the building and assembly points for evacuation of the premises were advised.

17-005 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES – 15 Dec 2016

Resolved (Koevoet/Hall)

17-001

THAT THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF 15 DECEMBER 2016 BE ACCEPTED AS A TRUE AND CORRECT RECORD.

17-006 BUDGET AND FINANCE:

006.1 Financial Reports & Expense Listing

Resolved (Koevoet/Hall)

17-002

THAT COUNCIL RECEIVES THE FINANCIAL REPORTS AND RATIFIES THE EXPENSE LISTINGS FOR DECEMBER 2016 AND JANUARY 2017 IN THE GST INCLUSIVE AMOUNTS OF \$54,646.06 AND \$121,878.93, RESPECTIVELY.

17-007 DOC LIAISON:

- None.



17-008 OPERATIONS AND STAFF REPORTS:

008.1 Activity Reports & Operations Reports (8.1)

Staff responded to general queries from Councillors related to topics reported in their activities and operations reports. Topics included:

- Benmore Irrigation Co. A Christensen advised that BIC have appealed the decision on the basis that they do not believe the Commissioners considered the issue of nutrients properly.
- Ashburton River Shorebird Management Strategy – M Hall advised that a public meeting is scheduled for the 7th March and encouraged the members of the public present at this meeting to consider attending this.

008.2 Staff Presentation of Fish Exclusion

Chief Executive advised that this presentation had initially been given at Council's Annual Public Meeting in December 2016 but due to increased interest as noted by the attendance of the public at this Council meeting he had asked Mark Webb to repeat his presentation. He also explained that in the early 2,000's M Webb and the CSI Council had pushed to have guidelines and criteria developed on fish exclusion.

M Webb gave his presentation outlining the various types of fish exclusion barriers around CSI and NC waterways. He presented examples of barriers that were successful and unsuccessful. He explained the work that had taken place over the last 15 years to develop more efficient fish barriers.

Chairman invited members of the public present to address Council on any issues.

A member of the public queried which fish screens have proven to be the most efficient? M Webb responded that permeable rock bund or gallery types were the most efficient and clarified that both the Acton scheme and the Rangitata Water Ltd (RWL) scheme were rock bund barriers.

A member of the public requested further detail on the Rangitata Water Scheme. Gary Rooney declared his conflict of interest on this issue and left the decision to the Council as to their views on this. Chief Executive explained to the public about Conflict of Interest and how this is managed. Alan Brooks queried if staff have the same level of knowledge on the running of this scheme that G Rooney has. Chief Executive responded that they did not. Linn Koevoet stated that as a Councillor he believed the person with the best knowledge should be the person to answer the public's questions and it was agreed that Mr Rooney should be asked to stay and participate in the discussion. Chief Executive asked parties in the room if they were happy for Mr Rooney to respond to questions. Voice response was in the affirmative with no dissent voiced.

Resolved (Koevoet/Whipp)

(17-003)

THAT G ROONEY BE REQUESTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSION AND RESPOND TO QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC RELATED TO THE RANGITATA WATER LTD SCHEME.

Peter Ritchie queried the status of the gate in the RWL barrier noting that he thought it was closed sometimes. Mr Rooney responded that the gate is open 100% of the time to allow fish to go back into the river. He further advised that RWL is monitored heavily by



ECan on this and explained the details related to length, width and height of the scheme. He reassured anglers that the RWL scheme consent conditions are being met.

Some members of the public expressed concern about the RDR fish screen being inefficient. G Rooney explained that Fish and Game are not very happy with RDR as Fish and Game had told RDR it had concerns related to the BAFF working back when it was first put in. Chief Executive advised that it was through the 2006 consent process that Fish and Game reached agreement with RDR to screen their intake. It was only due to Fish and Game and RDR coming together that RDR were convinced to put in a fish screen and have that screen monitored for efficiency.

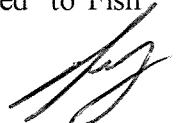
G Rooney advised that Fish and Game have lodged a submission opposing the latest RDR consents and added that RWL had opposed also. Council believes that RDR must achieve a workable fish screen and assured the public that Fish and Game have argued strongly on this.

General discussion ensued over the next hour where the public posed various questions on details of fish screens, efficiency, consents i.e., where things are now. The issue of testing the RWL scheme for information on fish present in the ponds was raised and anglers felt that more information was needed to help alleviate concerns. Council and G Rooney agreed that this could be useful to do however it would first need to investigate and work out a viable way of being able to undertake testings. M Hall stated he would like to see more testing on the bund system in the Rangitata as he personally didn't believe the decline of the salmon fishery was due to the RWL scheme and that whatever was causing the decline was beyond our control. He felt the time was right to hold a Salmon Symposium with emphasis on "trigger points" and involving anglers to find a way forward.

General concern at the lack of salmon in our rivers was also expressed. M Webb presented a chart that showed run size in 3 South Island salmon rivers dating back to 1994. The chart showed that all salmon rivers have the same pattern of run size and not all are affected by irrigation takes. This meant that the most likely cause of fewer salmon was something happening at sea. It could be a food issue (less krill or changed distribution with warmer sea surface temperatures), or a predation issue (it was noted seals etc are higher in numbers now), or rising sea surface temperature. It was pointed out that little is known about these factors and which may be having greatest effect but the one thing that is clear is that the pattern amongst the 3 South Island salmon fisheries is the same with the one common issue for all these rivers being that the salmon are coming back from the sea in lower numbers and are smaller (food related).

G Rooney then advised the public of the various projects Fish and Game has been undertaking on the Rangitata River to enhance spawning and gave reassurance that CSI Fish and Game will continue to keep enhancement as a priority. Council projects undertaken on the Rangitata over the last few years include fencing at Erewhon, willow removal and fencing at Deep Stream (Mesopotamia), success at obtaining a Water Conservation Order on the Rangitata, Ealing Springs restoration in conjunction with DoC, and involvement with the McKinnons Creek hatchery.

Alan Brooks queried the legal rights of Fish and Game around irrigation schemes 'taking' fish from the rivers. M Hall responded that Fish and Game operates under the Conservation Act and acts as an advocate. He didn't believe the fish 'belonged' to Fish



and Game and it would be more correct to say the fish belong to the Crown. All Fish and Game have is a management role. It was felt that if it's a natural event that fish are in the water it would be hard to argue an irrigation scheme is 'taking' fish when the fish are naturally going there.

Alan Brooks quoted advice to ECan Councillors from Rod Cullinane, General Manager of North Canterbury Fish and Game and an ECan Councillor that "*Any such take (of salmon and trout from the river) would require the consent of Fish and Game and no such consent has or would be given. Native species would require the consent of DoC*".

Jay Graybill requested that Mr Brooks ask Mr Cullinane to provide the legislative basis for his opinion.

008.3 Trevor Hill – Waitaki Riparian Enhancement Society

Mr Hill advised that he had received a response from Fish and Game to his Society's written request to rear and release hatchery fish from a commercial salmon farm. Fish and Game had declined the request noting that the situation is not yet to the "last resort" level. He queried what Fish and Game considered to be critical.

Chief Executive responded that Council has a policy to promote wild stocks of salmon. He explained that the Waitaki salmon have developed the quality of being larger than those in other salmon rivers. Council consider the number of fish in the Waitaki to be down but not at the level of collapse.

The question was then posed to the public in attendance whether wild fish should be taken from the Hakataramea by WRES or whether the fish should be left to natural reproduction. The voice response from the public present was to leave the fish alone.

008.4 Staff Presentation – Kahawai Fishing Around River Mouths

In response to a number of phone calls, queries, and statements made by sports fish anglers over the last two years H Stevens presented the legal status around fishing for sports fish and native fish at river mouths and the regulations related to both. He presented questions commonly asked by anglers and Fish and Game statements in response to those questions.

H Stevens re-iterated that to take a prosecution Fish and Game must have strong evidence that a kahawai fisherman has taken and kept a trout or salmon without being the holder of a current sports fishing licence. A kahawai angler has a reasonable defence in legislation if they catch a trout and salmon and immediately puts the sportfish back or if they can prove they took all reasonable steps to ensure they didn't commit an offence.

Councillors and some members of the public thanked Hamish Stevens for clarifying the issue.

17-009 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT:

009.1 McKinnons Trust – Funding for Fish Food (9.2)

The McKinnons Trust approached Council for some assistance in paying for the shortfall of fish food required to complete the 2017 release. Fish food has doubled in price and other hatcheries and groups that traditionally give fish food in exchange for eggs have turned to commercial hatchery eggs for their stock.



THAT CSI FISH AND GAME AGREE TO CONTRIBUTE \$4,000 TO MCKINNONS CREEK HATCHERY TO ASSIST IN COVERING THE SHORTFALL OF FISH FOOD THAT THEY REQUIRE TO COMPLETE THE 2017 RELEASE.

009.2 Power Boat Purchase

Council considered a proposal to purchase a power boat to assist in undertaking Council ranging activities and for research purposes. CSI Region has high angler usage of its lake fisheries (NIWA National Angler Survey) including the most fished lake of any Fish and Game Region in the country (Lake Benmore) and is second nationally only to Lake Taupo. Having a boat would increase ranging on CSI lakes where the majority of anglers fish from power boats and enable lake fishery research.

Resolved (Whipp/Isbister)

THAT COUNCIL APPROVES THE PURCHASE OF A POWER BOAT, OUTBOARD MOTOR, AND SAFETY/ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT AS RECOMMENDED BY STAFF TO UNDERTAKE COMPLIANCE AND FISHERIES RESEARCH PROJECTS ON THE REGION'S LAKES ACCORDING TO THE LOWEST QUOTE RECEIVED TO A TOTAL COST OF \$41,500 (GST INCL) AND WITH COST TO BE TAKEN FROM COUNCIL'S RESERVES.

17-010 NZ COUNCIL MATTERS:

010.1 M Hall provided an update on NZC matters. Topics included:

- upcoming NZ Council meeting in March to be held in the CSI Region,
- meeting of the Finance Review Committee to take place on March 6th in Chch,
- Horizons District Council One Plan,
- Cycleway in Southland,
- RMA reforms with new Prime Minister, and
- Lead shot.

17-011 GENERAL BUSINESS:

011.1 Way Forward for Salmon Fishing (MH)

M Hall felt it would be useful to have a further meeting with anglers to assist them with their submissions on the RDR consents.

M Hall suggested that Council consider holding a Salmon Symposium later in the year. It was noted that there is a need to educate and involve anglers.

M Hall stressed that testing on the RWL system is needed and would be good to involve some anglers for public validation.

Meeting closed: 11:35 pm.

Next Council Meeting – 20 April 2017

Signed 

Date 20/4/17