

# WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

## **DRAFT UNCONFIRMED**

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL,  
HELD ON TUESDAY 18 JUNE 2013 AT 3.00PM AT MASTERTON  
COSMOPOLITAN CLUB, 398 QUEEN STREET, MASTERTON.**

**1. Present:**

Chairman Martin Taylor, Councillors Andy Tannock, Richard Moore, Chris O'Meara, Brad Johnson, Simon Muckley, Mark Grace, Strato Cotsilinis, Andrew Morris.

**2. In Attendance:**

Staff: Phil Teal (Manager), Steve Pilkington, Nic Cudby, Corina Jordan (part)

Licenceholder: John Pansters

**3. Apologies:**

Councillors Jim Cook, , Eric Neumann

Licenceholder: Bob Hooker

**It was then moved that:**  
*the apologies be accepted.*

Chris O'Meara/Simon Muckley

Carried

**4. Conflicts of Interest**

A list was available for viewing of the existing declarations of Conflicts of Interest. There was no additional declaration of Conflicts of Interests declared.

**5. Minutes of Previous Meeting of 19 February 2013:**

After a brief discussion it was moved that:

*the Minutes of the last meeting of the previous Wellington Fish & Game Council of 19 February 2013 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.*

Simon Muckley/Brad Johnson

Carried

After further brief discussion it was moved that:

*the Expenditure Report for 28 February 2013 and Financial Transactions for January and February 2013 be approved*

Strato Cotsilinis/Chris O'Meara

Carried

6. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of Council Meeting on 19 February 2013.

7. **Future Focus**

Discussion ensued on the April strategic workshop discussions that identified five options to focus on:

1. Recognition and management of the chain of dune lakes on the Western coast of Manawatu for habitat and hunter opportunity.
2. Education programme in secondary school – extending the junior school focus
3. Trout pond in the Lower Hutt (fishery)
4. **Simmonds and Yules lagoon – huntable wetland for 10 maimai for junior hunting**
5. Retention – Prevent loss of hunters and anglers

It was agreed to further develop option 4 relating to Yules Lagoon. Nic Cudby gave an overview of management issues to achieve, including:

- water management (potential to build a shallow bund),
- Access (along stopbank or Donald's property),
- willow control (aerial spray),
- flood water levels,
- artesian water possibilities, and
- historical diversion watercourses that could be reinstated.

Mr Pansters arrived at 3.15pm

Chairman Taylor suggested that these concepts and issues be further developed into a full report that detailed timing, costs, and opportunities for club and hunter involvement.

It was then moved that

***A full report be developed that outlined the timing, costs, and club (and hunter) involvement in the restoration of Yules Lagoon.***

**Andrew Morris/Chris O'Meara**

Carried  
Unanimous

8. **NZ Council Business**

Councillor Morris gave an overview of the NZ Council Meetings held on 20 and 21 March 2013 and 24 and 25 May 2013.

Councillor Morris noted that the staff scholarship was budgeted to be \$10,000 per year but had been slightly oversubscribed for the upcoming year.

Councillor Morris noted that the minutes reflected the tension regarding a potential conflict of interest and how Councillors would consider the Chief Executive's remuneration.

The licence fee recommendation from Managers was discussed and it was further recommended by NZ Council that the licence fee increase for fishing and hunting licences be \$1 for each. It was further indicated that the Research Budget be increased by approximately \$34,000 with a view to contribute to mallard research.

It was moved that

*The report be accepted on NZ Council meetings held on 20 - 21 March 2013 and 24-25 May 2013 as presented by Councillor Morris as Wellington F&G's Appointee*

Richard Moore/Strato Cotsilinis  
Carried

**9. Draft Annual Plan 2013/14:**

The Draft Annual Plan was briefly discussed with it noted that following the licence fee recommendations the Annual Plan would be confirmed at the August meeting.

Mr Teal gave an overview of the budget process whereby an operational policy for setting budgets existed that additional funds cannot be considered if the previous years' budget had not been fully expended. He indicated that previously there had been a relaxed implementation of this policy, but this had been adhered to this budget round. He noted that new initiatives were not able to be considered and that full (or over) expenditure of budgets would rewarded over prudent financial management.

Chairman Taylor suggested that Wellington F&G write to NZ Council indicating concerns that adherence to this policy might drive inefficient expenditure and not reward fiscally conservative approaches.

It was then moved that

*A letter be sent to NZ Council indicating that the budget policy may be counterproductive and lead to inefficient expenditure, and it does not take into account any new significant regional initiatives.*

Richard Moore/Brad Johnson  
Carried

**10. Licence Fee Recommendation:**

Councillor Morris noted that the proposed new Non-Resident Licence and changes to the Fish Licence categories would not occur until at least the 2014/15 season. After brief discussion it was moved that

*Wellington Fish & Game Council support the recommendation by NZ Council that the 2013/14 Adult Wholeseason Sports Fish Licence Fee be \$121, and the Adult Wholeseason Game Licence be \$91 (inclusive of \$2 Game Bird Habitat Stamp contribution).*

**Chris O'Meara/Strato Cotsilinis**

Carried

**11. Draft Anglers Notice 2013/14:**

Mr Pilkington gave a brief overview of the two proposed changes outlined in the staff report.

The Hutt River drift dive monitoring results indicated good numbers of brown trout in February with a conclusion that the quite restrictive bag limit (of one fish per day) could be relaxed to two fish per day. Councillor Cotsilinis noted that angling reports concurred with the drift dive results and noted that the fish caught relatively recently had been in good condition.

The introduction of a back country licence had been approved in 2006 by Wellington F&G Council for the Whakaurekou River and tributaries with the main purpose of gathering information on angler use where it was reported that angling pressure was increasing. The introduction of the back country licence for the Whakaurekou River had been deferred until the 2013/14 season while the system was developed for the Upper Rangitikei Backcountry Licence.

It was then moved that

*A recommendation be made to the Minister of Conservation that*

- *The bag limit for Hutt River be changed from one fish per day to two fish per day for the 2013/14 season Anglers Notice ; and*
- *A backcountry licence for the Whakaurekou River and tributaries be introduced for the 2013/14 season Anglers Notice .*

**Andrew Morris/Chris O'Meara**

Carried

**12. Rangitikei River Trout Fishery Report Project 1112:**

Mr Pilkington gave an overview of the report on the Rangitikei River Project and answered questions.

It was then moved

*That the Rangitikei River Trout Fishery Management Report (Project 1112) be received,*

Richard Moore/Simon Muckley

Carried

Staff were thanked for their efforts in undertaking the fieldwork and completing the report.

**13. River Control Fishery Report Project 1113:**

Mr Pilkington gave an overview of trout numbers in the Hutt and Waikanae rivers being relatively high compared to previous years.

After brief discussion, it was moved

*That the River Control Fishery Report (Project 1113) be received*

Simon Muckley/Strato Cotsilinis

Carried

Staff were again commended for their efforts in undertaking the fieldwork and completing the report.

**14. Licence Working Party:**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of successful conclusion to process of selection and negotiation with Eyede Solutions Ltd as provider for licence management function. There were only two regional Fish & Game Council's yet to complete the signing formality (including Wellington).

It was agreed that Wellington Fish & Game Council would endorse the new agreement for a 3+2 year contract.

IT was then moved that

*The Regional Manager be granted delegated authority on behalf of Wellington Fish & Game Council to sign the contract with Eyede Solutions Ltd for licence management function for a 3+2 year period*

Andrew Morris/Chris O'Meara

Carried

**15. Fishing Licence Category Proposal:**

After brief discussion it was agreed to defer decisions on the proposals until a written reported had been developed outlining the pros and cons.

**16. One Plan Update:**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of progress on the requests by Hort NZ and Federated Farmers to reconvene the Environment Court hearing (which was

declined), the upcoming High Court hearing, and proposals for implementation strategy by the Regional Council. Chairman Taylor noted that Fish & Game needed to make sure the Regional Council's implementation plan needed to be robust and ensure adequate monitoring and that adequate regulatory framework results from the implementation plan. It was acknowledged that Fish & Game should be supporting regional councillors that support that position.

**17. Mallard Research:**

Mr Teal gave a brief update on the mallard research indicating that the proposed PhD student had withdrawn from the proposed telemetry study. The study will proceed with some additional staffing oversight for the first year while alternative project options are canvassed.

**18. Management Report 1 February – 31 May 2013**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the Wairarapa Water Use Project and indicated that one of the main sites involved the Mangaterere Stream (a principal spawning habitat). It was agreed that the Chairman would write to the regional council indicating concern at any effects on the stream and seek any information they had attained in the last six months. It was also considered that any reservoirs that may result from these irrigation projects should allow for a trout fishery and permission for access guaranteed.

Councillor O/Meara commented on the numbers in the swan trend counts and the observation that there were a high number of skinny birds present in the Wairarapa area with speculation that this was caused by drought conditions.

It was then moved that

*The management report for 1 February – 31 May 2013 be received.*

**Richard Moore/Brad Johnson**  
Carried

**19. Expenditure Report**

Mr Teal confirmed that Wellington Fish & Game were seeking part of the costs for Corina Jordan's contribution to RM projects in other regions.

After brief discussion it was moved

*the Expenditure Report for 30 April 2013 and Financial Transactions for March and April 2013 be approved*

**Strato Cotsilinis/Mark Grace**  
Carried

**20. Licence Sales Report to 30 May 2013**

Mr Teal indicated that fishing licence sales were up on budget compared to last year (90% of budget 2013 compared to 81% of budget 2012) but this could be due to timing of licence book returns.

He also indicated that game licence sales were down on budget compared to last year (77% of budget 2013 compared to 86% of budget 2012). But again may be due to timing of licence book returns.

It was moved that

*The Fish Licence Sales and Game Licence Sales reports as at 30 May 2013 be received.*

Andy Tannock/Andrew Morris  
Carried

**21. Correspondence**

A letter from Southland Fish & Game indicating their decision to prohibit use of lead in all sub-gauge shotguns and seeking regional Fish & Game support for this position. Discussion ensued on the perceived understanding that no action would be taken by Fish & Game until objective factual information had been sought via the Gamebird Harvest Survey and other sources such as ammunition importers. It was also pointed out that compliance of non-toxic shot for 12 gauge shotguns should remain a focus, and that pinning semi-autos may partially address issues of taking shots beyond appropriate range. It was agreed to receive the letter but let it lie, pending further fact gathering.

A letter from Fran Wilde (Chair Greater Wellington Regional Council & Wairarapa Moana) outlined that the Wairarapa Moana Group would consider Fish & Game's involvement in the fish removal project and representation on the Governance and Management Group structures. Discussion ensued on contributing to the fish removal project if there is some involvement of Fish & Game on at least the Management Group.

**22. General Business**

Chairman Taylor confirmed that he and Mr Teal had met with the Kahungunu Wairarapa Chair Nelson Rangi regarding the need to build a relationship in the co-management model. It was noted that a proposal to reopen flow from the river diversion at the Ruamahanga cut to increase the flushing effect on the lake was considered important to them and should be supported in concept by Fish & Game.

It was moved that

*A letter be sent by the Chairman supporting the Kahungunu concept for the opening up flow from the Ruamahanga Cut to the lake and request the Regional Council to initiate investigations of its feasibility*

Chris O'Meara/Andrew Morris  
Carried

Councillor Morris indicated that NZ Council were seeking potential nominations for the Game Bird Habitat Trust that would be recommended by Fish & Game to the Minister of Conservation.

After brief discussion it was considered that Andy Tannock was someone who has the attributes and business acumen that would add value to the board in meeting its strategic goals. It was moved that

***Andy Tannock be nominated by Wellington Fish & Game Council to be a formal nomination by Fish & Game NZ to be a trustee on the Game Bird Habitat Trust Board***

**Brad Johnson/Simon Muckley**  
Carried

After brief discussion it was agreed to send a letter of support to Hawke's Bay Fish & Game Council regarding the application of a Water Conservation Order for the Ngaruroro River to reflect the value that Wellington Region anglers place on that waterbody. Mr Teal would also request angling clubs in the Wellington region to indicate the support for this initiative.

Mr Pilkington gave an overview of the mallard transect count results which indicated that in April numbers counted were relatively low – reflecting a downward trend and effects of the drought. It was agreed that if a management response is to change regulations to restrict harvest (season length, bag limit, or method such as pinning semi-auto shotguns) then this needs to be conveyed to hunters and accompanied with adequate instructions (eg help on pinning shotguns).

Councillor Grace initiated discussion on the concept of releasing ducks that had been trialled in the Hawke's Bay region.

Mr Pansters gave a brief overview of Wairarapa anglers involvement in the tagging programme in the Ruamahanga catchment, and fish-trap project in the Mangaterere Stream. He indicated that if the rationale and reasons for any regulatory response then licenceholders shouldn't have any issues. He outlined the commitment of local anglers to assist in getting good spawning counts for browns in the Mangaterere Stream given potential RM issues.

The meeting was suspended at 5.25pm and reconvened at 5.40 pm.

Corina Jordan joined the meeting at 5.40pm

Chairman Taylor acknowledged the excellent work by Ms Jordan on the One Plan and importance of ensuring that sufficient monitoring and regulation setting is put in place for its implementation. He also commended Ms Jordan



on recent radio interviews which presented the issues in a clear and persuasive style.

Ms Jordan expressed her concerns that many of the gains made by the case law resulting from the One Plan decision may be undermined by a lack of internal strategic direction and focus on key issues - eg regions should be consistently advocating for a Controlled Activity status for nitrogen leaching rather than supporting Permitted Activity rules. It was recognised that a concerted political effort was being undertaken by industry players to influence Government policy.

Discussion then ensued on the overall strategic Fish & Game approach to efficiency and effective RM advocacy. Issues and examples included:

- regional Fish & Game focused cases that were inconsistent with new case law was inefficient;
- the need to get the message out to the public (and internally) – regarding outcomes and best approaches;
- the strength of the original regional cases needs to be robust – eg Hurunui Regional Plan decision to allow N to increase to toxicity (currently seeking High Court declaration);
- The limit setting process and criteria: desired water quality state; vs setting at “life supporting capacity” – the former allows headroom for increased N leaching and focus primarily on phosphorus mitigation

Chairman Taylor reiterated that Fish & Game need to be strategic and have a considered structured conversation or risk the One Plan decision being seen as an ‘outlier’ in terms of regional plans.

Councillor Muckley considered that there needed to be a presentation on NZ Council – both at governors and regional managers levels. Chairman Taylor noted that these issues need to be out to, and presented in front of, NZ Council and to be shown as problems to be addressed

Ms Jordan explained the merits of producing potentially producing up to three keystone documents that were developed by key technical experts to provide awareness to politicians and/or public awareness: economics, sustainable agriculture, and national water quality limits.

It was agreed that Chairman Taylor would send a letter to NZ Council indicating:

- An overview of the strategic RM issues;
- The potential problems Fish & Game are facing (with examples);
- The central government advocacy is being done very well by NZ Council staff under the prevailing circumstances;

- Significant risk that Fish & Game will be losing cases at the second tier regional planning level;
- An analysis of the stage in the process of regional planning for each region needs to be undertaken;
- The need to be consistent amongst the Fish & Game regions when submitting on regional plans;
- Potential solutions to improving the Fish & Game RM function – in terms of effectiveness – both consistency) and financial efficiency
- Request to put in a aural presentation to NZ Council

Other regions would also be canvassed for potential endorsement of the outcomes, and potential solutions.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 6.15pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Coachman Hotel, Palmerston North Wednesday 21 August 2013 at 3.00pm

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

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