



AGENDA

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH AND GAME COUNCIL

16 MAY 2020

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held by Video Conferencing
on Saturday 16 May 2020 commencing at 9 a.m.

AGENDA

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* Denotes attachments

M. Young
Chairman

9/03/20

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

Minutes of a Meeting of Council
held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Dr, Hamilton,
on Saturday 21 March 2020 commencing at 11am.

PRESENT:

Chairman: D. Cocks

Councillors: P. Shaw, C. Sherrard, S. Smith, G. Annan, N. Juby, W. Howard

Staff: B. Wilson, J. Dyer, D. Klee

1. APOLOGIES

M. Young, G. Avery, A. Kerr, E. Williamson, J. Shaw

It was moved;
that the apologies be accepted.

Annan/Smith - CARRIED

2. POSSIBLE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM MEETING AGENDA:

None declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 29 February 2020:

It was moved;
that the minutes of the previous meeting of 29 February 2020 be accepted as a true
and correct record.

Smith/Shaw - CARRIED

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Mr Klee updated councillors on the botulism outbreak on the Hauraki Plains/Firth of Thames. He stressed that fish kills were still occurring with both botulism and toxic algal blooms occurring. Waterfowl carcasses were still being removed and buried by volunteers.

5. CORRESPONDENCE:

A letter was tabled from the President of the North Shore Fly Fishers Club Inc, David Symes, stating that the club no longer supports the release of trout into Lake Pupuke.

After discussion it was agreed that Dr Daniel be requested to prepare a report on the Lake Pupuke trout fishery.

An email was tabled from the Chairman of the Hamilton Fish and Game Association, Dave Malcolm, requesting that a special weekend pukeko season be established for all of the Auckland/Waikato Region to align with the special paradise shelduck and pukeko season north of the Harbour Bridge. Councillors agreed that the concept of a special pukeko season was worth considering but agreed that Council's policy was to assess major changes to the game regulations at three yearly intervals. Therefore, it was agreed that any decision on the Hamilton Fish & Game Association request should be delayed until the next major review of the game regulations.

It was moved;
that all correspondence be accepted.

Annan/Smith - CARRIED

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

In reply to a question, Mr Wilson stated that they had not yet received the results from the tests to determine whether the sterile trout project had succeed in producing triploid trout.

Mr Dyer was asked to explain the discrepancy between his verbal report at the February council meeting and the data provided in the CE report regarding the number of paradise shelduck counted on the King Country trend count. Mr Dyer replied that it didn't matter what threshold was used as it would not have been practical to have a special season. Mr Wilson stated that protocols were now in place to avoid this misunderstanding reoccurring.

Mr Klee provided an update on the OCD consent application noting that a hearing was going to be held the following week. He was disappointed that DOC would not be attending the hearing.

Mr Wilson reported that the commissioners for the Healthy Rivers Plan Change for the Waikato catchment had produced their report. He had requested an assessment of the report by Council's external experts Helen Marr (Planning) and Sarah Ongley (legal).

It was moved;
that the Chief Executive's bi-monthly report to be accepted.

Juby/Annan - CARRIED

Financial Statement

Mr Wilson introduced the financial report emphasising that the coronavirus would have

a significant impact on revenue but the magnitude of the decline could not yet be accurately forecast.

It was moved;
that the financial report be accepted.

Smith/Shaw - CARRIED

7. Land and Water Habit Trust:

The annual report for 2018/19 of the Land and Water Habitat Trust was tabled.

It was moved;
that the 2018/19 annual report for the Land and Water Habitat Trust be accepted.

Smith/Shaw - CARRIED

8. Transpower Contractors:

Mr Wilson introduced his report, which stated that Transpower contractors have the right of access to Fish and Game land with prior notification, and that Fish & Game cannot impose a bond.

9. Management Plan:

The draft management plan and review process were tabled. Mr Wilson asked Councillors to provide any feedback by email noting that a final draft plan would be produced for the June Council meeting.

10. Ward Ranch Update:

Mr Wilson updated the meeting on recent developments with the Ward Ranch case.

11. Operational Work Place and Budget for 2020/21:

Mr Wilson emphasised that due to the exceptional unpredictability of the revenue forecast it was likely that there would have to be ongoing changes to the operational work and budget.

Councillors agreed that there would be no request for increased funding other than from the non-resident reserve.

Councillor Juby stated that there would be considerable opposition to any increase in the licence fee from the southern councils.

It was moved;
that the 2020/21 operational work plan and budget of \$816,188 be accepted but noting that there would need to be some ongoing flexibility because of the unpredictability of the revenue forecast.

Juby/Sherrard – CARRIED

12. OSH Report

Councillors discussed the potential impact of the current epidemic on Council's operations and meetings.

It was agreed that the next meeting would most likely have to be carried out by video conferencing. Mr Wilson agreed to organise this including the purchase of webcams if available.

It was moved;
that the OSH Report for February 2020 be accepted.

Annan/Sherrard – CARRIED

13. General Business

The Chairman informed the meeting of the recent vandalism of the Whangamarino weir. Mr Wilson reported that a DOC engineer would soon be visiting the site to assess the damage and the cost of repairs.

Councillor Juby suggested that Council should consider requesting district councils to put in place provisions allowing land owners that provide enduring access to public amenities, such as a wetland or river, the right to subdivide off a title.

It was moved;
that staff are requested to produce a report on Councillor Juby's recommendation.

Juby/Sherrard – CARRIED

Councillors discussed the recent survey of Fish and Game councillors by the national office. Only one Auckland/Waikato Councillor has successfully completed the survey.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 1pm.

Bi-Monthly Chief Executive's Report

Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Meeting May 2020

Output 1: Species Management

Project 1111 - Drift diving

Drift dive reports and tabulation was completed in April including the Mangatutu, Waihou, Waimakariri, Whakapapa and Awakino reports. All rivers were in good shape in terms of fish populations. The reports will be sent out with the June Council Agenda.

Project 1115 - Population Surveys

Adam Daniel conducted Koi and perch netting with DOC in Lake Karapiro after a credible report of a perch sighting was received. Seven 30m nets were set around the water-ski club boat ramp. No perch were detected but a koi had previously been recovered. Adam Daniel also conducted a snorkel survey of the water-ski club area and spotted plenty of rudd but no perch. netting survey

Project 1121 - Harvest survey

Adam Daniel updated the water clarity and fish condition data for Lake Arapuni. The lack of rain that occurred early in 2020 drastically reduced runoff from agriculture and significantly improved water clarity in Lake Arapuni. Trout condition also significantly improved in 2020 producing some of the biggest trout seen in a decade.

Project 1161 - Trout Releases

Trout were tested to ensure the pressure treatment made the fish sterile and all fish were in fact sterile. A procedure was developed that will allow Fish and Game staff to check for sterility in the future.

Consultation with both Auckland trout fishing clubs was undertaken due to a request to stop stocking Lake Pupuke. Both clubs agreed that the money would be better spent elsewhere due to the poor condition of the fish. An article was written for the Reel Life requesting feedback from licence holders but never published due to COVID-19. A report on the future the Lake Pupuke stocking program has been partially written but is awaiting feedback from licence holders. The program currently cost over \$10,000 a year and there is little evidence fish are surviving more than a year.

Project 1162 - Pheasant releases

John Dyer gave feedback on an application by DoC for a pheasant release near Maungatautari.

Project 1181 – Gamebird Control

Despite the lockdown, we are still being approached to provide the necessary permits to do gamebird control. Auckland International Airport are very concerned about Canadian geese

that have recently turned near their runway but were not sure where these were coming from.

Mr Dyer has been in contact with trap sellers in the UK about the new Tully trap, which has proven problematical in terms of the weight a critter must put on the trap to set it off. Scientists now think that controlling the lighter female stoat or weasel is the key to controlling these species. However lately the new Tully has been modified to help offset this and early ones are being retrofitted. New Zealand's DoC trap is not popular in the UK, partly due to similar problems and also its large bulk and especially expense. The good old Fenn trap is still the gold-standard in terms there of practical pest control but is being phased out by European regulations which have very little relevance in Britain, even despite Brexit. The genesis for these regulations came from New Zealand!

Canada Geese

David has prepared a report to help inform councils current policy on the potential of returning geese to schedule 1.

Botulism and Banding

David has prepared a report that assess the potential to reduce effort expended on banding and redirect this into botulism recovery operations.

OUTPUT 2: HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

Project 1211 - RMA

Waikato District Plan

Mischa Davis has returned from a year's maternity leave and has been working on preparing for the hearings on the Waikato District Plan. The hearings are going ahead as scheduled online via Zoom.

On the 7th of April, Ben Wilson presented at the hearing on the Country Living Zone specifically challenging the rule that requires landowners to obtain a resource consent for building a maimai within 32 meters of a lake or wetland or 28 meters of the Waikato or Waipa rivers. The Council's reasons for the rule are that they are doubtful that there would be situations in the zone that could accommodate the ability to safely fire a gun. There are several Country Living Zones that adjoin the Waikato River including areas where the zone overlaps with the riparian margin. Ben highlighted how shooting from maimai's is safer than drift shooting, which is popular on the Waikato River. He also noted how maimai's need to be within a close distance of waterbodies due to a shotgun's range being 30-40 meters at best.

We will raise the same points again in the hearing on the Rural Chapter, which we are now in the process of preparing evidence for, as the same rule applies in the rural zone as well. Other key concerns for the Rural Chapter are the earthworks rules which currently inhibit wetland maintenance works by requiring landowners to obtain resource consents for earthworks activities that divert or change waterbodies, and reverse sensitivity policies where we are seeking that recreational hunting be recognised as a typical feature of the rural environment and so its effects, such as noise from firearms and building maimai near

waterbodies, are accepted and managed accordingly. We are awaiting confirmation of a date for the Rural Chapter hearing which had initially been scheduled for June.

AWFG Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plan

Mischa has been reviewing the draft management plan which still needs work before it can be publicly notified for feedback from licence holders.

Healthy Rivers PC1

The Waikato Regional Council notified their decision on 22 April to adopt the Commissioner's Recommendations on PC1 with minor changes. Anna Sintenie provided a summary of the 500 page document before she left. We are now awaiting a report from our legal counsel Sarah Ongley before deciding whether we will lodge an appeal or join as a s274 party under the Resource Management Act to another party's appeal such as DoC. We have 30 working days to decide; however, Waikato Regional Council have applied to have this timeframe extended to 50 working days which would suit us a lot better if granted.

National Developments

The New Zealand Fish and Game Council made a submission on the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity. The submission highlighted how overall Fish and Game broadly supports the NPS-IB believing that implementing the policy will have wide ranging habitat benefits that will support both indigenous and valued introduced biodiversity alike. Concern however was raised about a lack of a clear definition of pests and that this should be defined – limiting it to plant, animal or insect species that are defined as pests by statute or within regional pest management plans. Another concern was the concept of biodiversity off-setting which Fish and Game considers to be inherently problematic - instead recommending that the use of biodiversity off-setting be restricted from what is proposed in the NPS-IB.

Waitomo Wastewater Treatment Plant

Further meetings with Tourism Holding Ltd (THL) have taken place. Despite the impact of Covid-19 on tourism, THL are progressing with the upgrades at the site. A document detailing the Consent Conditions that Fish and Game require was produced and shared with THL. The consent requires a 7% reduction in contaminant release over the lifetime of the consent (7 years). The document has been well received and work is concluding on these conditions. This will then be sent through to Waikato Regional Council for inclusion in their Resource Consent and avoid the need to go to a Hearing.

Puke Coal

Further to meeting the applicant on site in early March and gaining an understanding of the plans for the site and its current operation, a document detailing the Consent Conditions that Fish and Game require was shared with the applicant. This set out operational improvements, reductions between 25 -50% in contaminant releases and the establishment of an Environmental Bond of \$840,000. The document has been well received and Puke Coal Ltd have indicated that they are happy to adopt these conditions. It is planned that this will be finalised over the coming weeks.

Fonterra Waitoa

A site visit has been completed by Jane Shaw and identified several issues that are currently being discussed with Fonterra. There are potential problems relating to the temperature and Zinc concentrations in the discharged stormwater and a lack of data for assessment which needs to be investigated further. The application is with Waikato Regional Council at present, but it is not certain whether Fish & Game will be notified and have the opportunity to submit of this.

Cambridge Wastewater Treatment Plant

Jane has had a series of meetings with Waipa District Council regarding their Resource Consent application for Cambridge WWTP. The site is close to finishing a \$2m upgrade and work is being completed on the Long-term plans for site with funding levels being determined at present. Once the current upgrade is complete, monitoring of site performance will take place. The Hearing has been postponed and is likely to take place in September/ October. It is hoped that further data and information on the Council's long-term investment strategy will assist Fish and Game in the assessment of their application.

Ohinewai/ Ambury Development

There is ongoing work relating to this proposal and discussions with representatives continue. The Section 42a report from Waikato District Council has indicated that the industrial development would meet their planning objectives, however the residential development would not (only 50 workers are needed at the factory whilst the proposals are for 1250 houses). The Hearing date has been currently been postponed till the 6th August. A summary of recreational noise releases was submitted to the Consultants to support the need for reverse sensitivity clauses within any titles associated with the development. Work is continuing regarding their flooding risk assessments and wastewater plans.

Resource Consent Database

A database of all Resource Consents issued by Waikato Regional Council has been produced, extracting any consents that have the potential to impact upon freshwater quality from the 22,000 consents held by the Council. Work is currently underway to prioritise these based upon expiry date and environmental risk. Companies with Resource Consents that expire within the next 3 years shall be contacted and early discussions into site optimisation and opportunities for improvement in discharges are hoped to take place.

District Council Meetings

Following on from the last update, a series of meetings are planned with the District Councils/ City Councils in the AWF&G region to discuss their wastewater treatment strategies and operations. Discussions have also taken place with Taupo District Council and Manawatu District Council on their move to land application and summaries of their operations produced for sharing with District Councils and Iwi in this region. With the impact of Covid-19, these meetings have been moved back several weeks however it is anticipated that these will resume soon.

Iwi Liaison

Work has been started on sharing knowledge and information with Iwi within the Auckland/Waikato Region. Collaboration has continued with the work on Te Kauwhata

WWTP and is planned to increase on the broader issues of domestic and industrial wastewater affecting river and lake water quality in the region. A monthly report summarising the Resource Consent applications and their associated risks is being shared with Iwi and meetings are planned for the near future.

“Healthy Environments” - Waikato Resource Management Plan

WRC is doing a holistic review of the Waikato Regional Plan and Waikato Regional Coastal Plan to put them into a single *Waikato Resource Management Plan* (WRMP). The process is called “Healthy Environments” and is being broken into two phases, with consultation from 2020-2022 and an operative plan expected in 2028. Phase 1 reviews the Coastal Plan; phase 2 reviews the Waikato Regional Plan. PC 1 will eventually also become part of the WRMP.

WRC released a discussion document for phase 1. On the 6th of April we made a submission outlining the importance of ensuring the plan adopts an integrated approach that considers both coastal discharges and catchment discharges originating inland of the coastal environment. We also stated that we agree with the issue of managing the maintenance and removal of abandoned maimai, and that we are open to assisting in information sharing amongst our licence holders in relation to methods we may adopt to address this issue.

Open Country Dairy

David has prepared expert evidence for this case with Ben and Richard Foster also giving advocacy evidence. A copy of the evidence should be posted to the WRC website or can be forwarded onto anyone that are interested in the Waitoa/Piako River system and issues occurring there. The hearing was originally scheduled to commence at the end of march but is now set to commence 27th May, covid-19 permitting.

Thames Wastewater Treatment Plant

David had some further discussion with the applicant (Thames Coromandel District Council) prior to lockdown to discuss discharge limits and try to get an understanding of botulism management at the site. By the end of February, the plant had recorded nearly 1500 bird mortalities plus members of the community reported other hotspots on the surrounding beaches which likely emanated from this site. Botulism plans were first presented to TCDC in 2014, but disappointingly it appears that none of the preventative measures discussed therein are being used and the only focus is on carcass removal. This also appears to be limited as contractors have indicated they cannot use any watercraft under 6m in length for health and safety reasons. It was pointed out that this position was inconsistent with other contractors that we deal with and that we are not asking them to go marlin fishing. David has requested an update on the consenting process and botulism outbreak. He has also indicated that in this instance it will be important to have a botulism management plan in place, prior to the consent being granted so that everyone has some certainty around how this will be managed in future.

Te Kauwhata Wastewater Treatment Plant

David has had further correspondence with Iwi and yet another new Waikato District Council representative that has been charged with leading this process. He expressed concerns about the lack of any updates for the past 18 months and the fact that consented timeframes outlining the upgrade process are falling well behind schedule.

Project 1231 Other Land.

WCEET Projects

David lodged 2 funding applications to WCEET for wetland and riparian restoration in the Opuatia and lower Waikato River catchments. The projects would be funded by a combination of sources including GBHT, WCEET, WRC and the WRA and have a total value of \$215,00. The last of our wetland projects we had scheduled to begin at the end of March has had to be postponed to next summer.

Dean Wetland

John applied to WCEET largely for funding digger work for a special project centred around Wattle Island in the Dean Wetland. This would re-establish 3 long walkways and associated canals which have over the years become somewhat useless, (in part, because peat shrinks when exposed to air). It would also establish some old works in the area, currently choked with pampas, as a perfect out of the way roost for birds seeking a quiet spot. The 2-hectare island itself, currently all gorse and a few wattle trees, would be cleared to plant more useful Fish & Game trees. This would not only make much better nesting opportunities but also mean access for volunteers and a tractor would be established to do tree planting, staking, mulching and releasing as well as a small trapping programme. David Lawrie, our ex-chairman, has graciously acted as referee for this application.

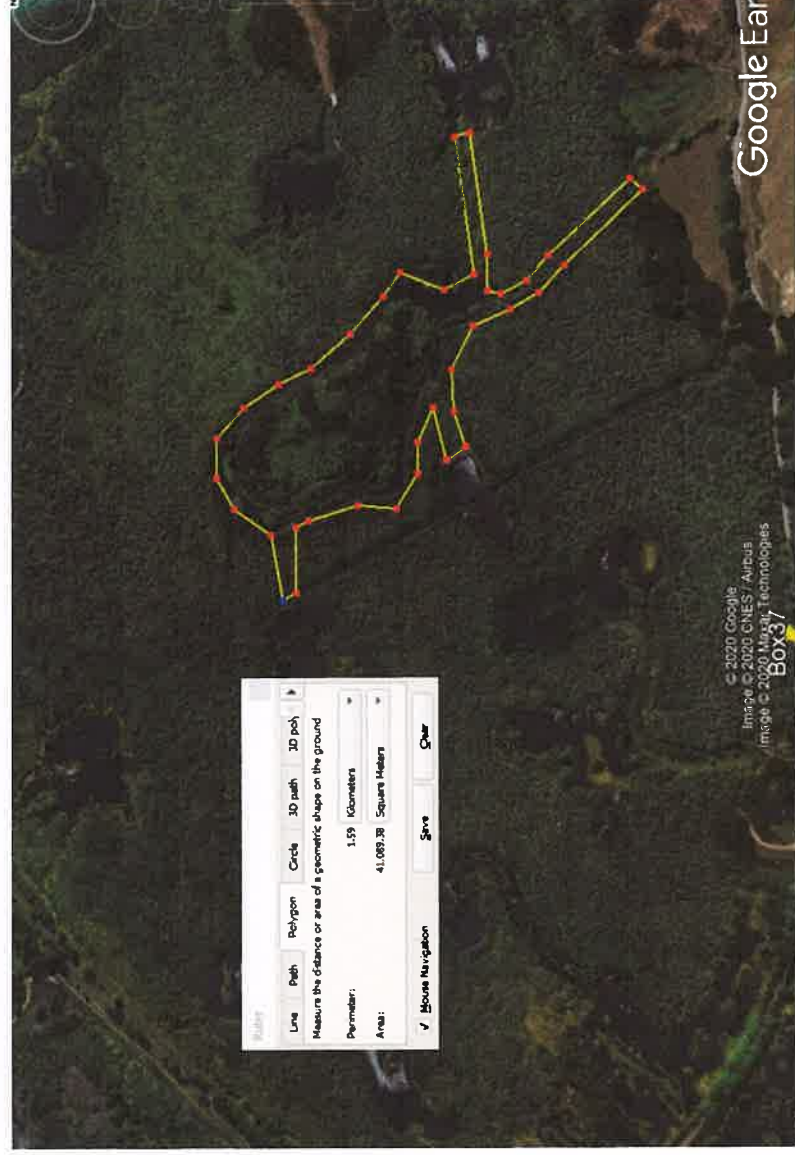


Photo 1: The Wattle Island project area, Dean Wetland.

Lake Kimihia

David has reviewed the latest technical report and has site visits planned with contractors and WRC staff to assess the potential for remedial action as soon as we are able to conduct on site meetings.

Project 1241 - Assessment and monitoring (water quality study)

Genesis has responded to requests for an updated on the Lake O discharge to the Whanganui River. The study program will include suspended solids monitoring, fish stranding monitoring and MCI. We are happy with the program and will monitor the progress. Significant fish stranding was observed during the water quality monitoring program. Plans were in place to monitor the discharge during shutdown this year but were cancelled due to COVID-19.

The WRC responded to an OIA request from Adam Daniel on the investigation of a dairy effluent release into the Kaniwhaniwha Stream. Adam and David documented the effluent release into the river in late 2019. The council will be prosecuting both the farm owner and the contract milker when courts reopen.

OUTPUT 3: PARTICIPATION

Project 1311 - Access negotiation

The Toa Bridge property was visited by Adam Daniel to set up a drift dive and establish a relationship with the new owner. A drone was used to survey the potential dive reach for obstructions, but the dive was not conducted due to weather and the COVID-19 shutdown. This visit was made possible by the efforts of former councillor Atkinson.

Project 1341 - Other publications

Significant work has gone into revamping the online and paper versions of the access pamphlets for both hunting and fishing.

Adam Daniel prepared multiple press releases for the level 3 opening of fishing, but all were cancelled when the Rahui was placed on the Waikato and Waipa Rivers. Adam Daniel contacted the Māori King's office to discuss the issue and our view that allowing fishing would help the community recover by improving mental health. Adam Daniel has agreed to meet with the king's ministers when it is possible. A series of Rahui were imposed on the North Island that prohibited fishing and hunting.

An article has been submitted to Ducks Unlimited 'Flight' magazine re the use of game cameras to better monitor bird use on members ponds, vermin interactions with traps and even just for fun. Game cameras certainly help people managing sites make better informed decisions based on what is happening out of sight, day and night.

Waihi Press were delighted to run a good news story for a change when they learnt about our 2 ducks turning up at Lifou Island, New Caledonia. Best of all, they reminded their readers to send in the details of any duck bands they come across. Richie Cosgrove, our South Island based F&G Senior Communications Advisor, helped disseminate this story. He has proven to be very helpful in a whole variety of ways – not least by always being so positive and helpful!

Media Release

David and DOC staff put together a joint media release highlighting the issues in the lower Piako catchment this summer. This was widely picked up and subsequent interviews were conducted with newsroom, newshub, and the Waikato Times.

OUTPUT 4: PUBLIC INTERFACE

Project 1431 - Liaison Advocacy

Adam gave a talk on fishing and access to the Hamilton Deer Stalkers.

David submitted an abstract to give an oral presentation at the 11th international wetlands conference in Christchurch which was scheduled for later this year. The presentation is titled; *Combating botulism outbreaks; early detection and preventative actions in the face of increased risk*. We have just learned that unsurprisingly this conference has now been postponed until 2021.

Project 5442 - Public Awareness

Shifting the game bird season

As you can imagine some of the staff have been inundated with phone calls, emails and messages seeking clarification and advice. This has taken considerable time and effort to respond, although it has often been difficult for us regions to elaborate given the rapid changes occurring. For example, originally, we were advised by national office than hunting under level 3 should be fine and then this changed later. Some better direct national communication with licence holders would have been beneficial to help stem the angst.

OUTPUT 5: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Project 1511 - Ranging/Training

Adam attended Hamilton District Court to support the NZ Police who had laid charges against two men found with methamphetamine and weapons at the blue spring walkway. The men were both charged with multiple fishing offences and fined \$2000 and \$2800.

Project 1531 - Legal

Adam has been actively involved in the national pest fish partnership and will be involved in the Koi Herpes Virus advisory group.

B. Wilson,
Chief Executive