

AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME NEWSBRIEF

If you require further elaboration or clarification of items contained herein, or any other matters relating to F&G business, please don't hesitate to contact your local ward councillor or the office.

Matters arising from Council Meeting and AGM of 12 December 2020

1. Councillors agreed that a closer working relationship with the farming community was desirable. Therefore, they supported the Chief Executive, Ben Wilson meeting with his Federated Farmers counterpart to discuss how the two agencies can work more closely together.
2. It was agreed to write to the current and previous NZ Chairmen, Mr Paul Shortis and Mr Ray Grubb thanking them for their considerable efforts on behalf of Fish & Game over the previous year.
3. DRAFT MEETING SCHEDULE 2021:
The following meeting schedule for 2021 was approved.
 - 20 February
 - 20 March
 - 12 June
 - 14 August
 - 16 October
 - 13 November
4. Councillor Juby emphasised to the meeting the considerable efforts by Ms Davis and Mr Wilson on informing other regions on the issues with the new National Environmental Standards for Freshwater. The impact of the NES on maimai construction and wetland maintenance were now seen as national issues and not just concerns specific to the Auckland/Waikato region.
5. Councillor Juby expressed his appreciation for the high quality and usefulness of the report on public access prepared by Ms Davis, which will be of considerable benefit to Council in advocating our interest in access to rivers and wetlands.
6. Councillor Shaw expressed his appreciation to Mr Stan Bowen for his generous donation of bait stations to Fish & Game. It was agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to Mr Bowen.
7. It was agreed that the limit for the 2021 special shelduck season north of the Auckland harbour bridge be increased to 15 per day.
8. Mr Wilson was asked to approach the Ruapehu District Council about potential options for securing enduring public access to the Whakapapa River at Stone Jug Road.
9. Councillors discussed the considerable efforts over many years of Mr John Atkinson as Fish and Game Councillor, NZ Councillor and member of the wild trout tagging team. Mr Atkinson had been a strong advocate for Fish and Game especially with local landowners. It was agreed that Mr John Atkinson be formally thanked by Council for his considerable contribution to Auckland Waikato Fish & Game over many years.

Matters Arising From Chief Executive's Report

- **Trout Releases:** 1000 sterile rainbow trout were tagged and released into Lake Arapuni with 1000 normal hatchery reared rainbow trout of similar size. It will take at least a year to receive enough return data to determine if the program is beneficial in terms of increasing fish weight.
- **Kinleith Forests Access:** Anthony van Dorp (Eastern F&G) has been negotiating access to the Kinleith Forest for upland game hunters. Hunters must apply for a permit through the Kinleith Forest Recreation Club which will accept game bird hunters applications for membership, and they will arrange the relevant access permits. Access is only available to hunter access during weekends, and during the game bird season.
- **Waikato District Plan:** We presented at the hearing on the Proposed Waikato District Plan for the Rural Chapter which took place via zoom on the 29th September. We submitted three pieces of evidence for the hearing which included David Klee on earthworks in wetlands, Ben Wilson on the importance of building maimai as a permitted activity, and earthworks in wetlands identified as Significant Natural Areas, and Mischa Davis who addressed all the matters generally from a planning and legal perspective.
- **Healthy Rivers PC1:** On the 8th of July we filed our appeal against the decision of the Waikato Regional Council on Proposed Plan Change 1 to the Waikato Regional Plan. Our appeal was prepared by our legal counsel Sarah Ongley with input from our staff and external expert planner Helen Marr.
- **Cambridge WWTP:** Late last year we filed a submission opposing the Waipā District Council's short-term consent application to renew the Cambridge Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) consents, based primarily on the adverse effects associated with the discharge of treated wastewater on the Waikato River and a lack of certainty of outcomes for the long-term solution. The council held a hearing for the consent application on 19 October. David Klee, Adam Daniel, and Clare Robertson all attended on behalf of Fish and Game and gave a statement relating to the agreed set of conditions and MOU that we signed with Waipa DC. We are satisfied with the outcome, but also made it clear that we are relying on the Council to honour its commitments to stakeholders. We were thanked for our pragmatic approach.
- **Open Country Dairy:** The court assisted mediation has been postponed while we await further changes to the application. Initially OCD explored an offsetting approach that would retire and convert farmland into treatment wetlands, however the size and scale required was deemed to be too expensive and difficult to implement. Instead OCD are now revising their application to continue with a summer discharge to land plus the treatment upgrade. Clare and David had a meeting with OCD representatives and consultants. It was indicated that the new application would reduce the total load of N and P entering the River and Firth of Thames by around 50% compared to existing loads. We await the application for further details.
- **Wetland restoration:** In recent times there have been some divergences of opinion regarding plan rules and how they are being implemented when it comes to wetland restoration projects. For example, the classification of ephemeral and perennial watercourses and how the regional council identify these. David Klee got agreement from Waikato Regional Council compliance managers to free up some resourcing in order to take staff out to sites and ensure all agencies agree regarding the rules governing wetland restoration activities. At this stage, it has been agreed that 3 projects will be assessed on a trial basis to determine how well the process works and site visits were recently conducted. In our opinion it is always more beneficial to see the projects first-hand, meet landowners and get a complete understanding of project activities and where they will occur.