

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 councillor or the office.

Matters arising from the Council Meeting of 16 May 2020

1. Grant Annan was elected unopposed as Chairman.
2. The appointment of Councillor Annan as Chairman created a vacancy as Vice-Chairman. Council policy is that one Vice-Chairman should be from the north and one from the south of the region. Shane Smith was elected unopposed as Southern Vice-Chairman.
3. Dr Daniel updated Councillors on the sterile trout programme. The sterile rainbow trout will be released into Lake Arapuni in October this year.
4. Dr Daniel noted that the drift dive proposed for the Waipa River at Toa Bridge had been postponed due to the Covid 19 shutdown. The Chairman emphasised the efforts of ex-councillor John Atkinson who was successful in opening communications between the landowner and Fish & Game.
5. Councillors discussed Mr Klee's report on the banding programme, which was considered to provide essential data for the management of the duck population as well as having high level of community involvement and excellent ongoing publicity. It was recognised by Councillors that the programme was relatively low cost due to the high level of voluntary input by the hunting community. Councillors thanked Mr Klee for the high-quality report and agreed that the banding programme be retained with a re-evaluation in five years to determine whether alternative survey methods (aerial transits) could provide the level of precision required to determine population change in our region.
6. Councillors discussed Mr Klee's report on Canada geese. It was agreed that Canada geese should only be returned to the First Schedule (wildlife declared to be game) if sufficient external funding were provided to reduce and maintain numbers at manageable levels.
7. Council approved the licensing contract between Fish & Game and Eyede. It was also agreed that the Chairman could sign the contract on behalf of Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game. Councillors agreed that the Licencing Committee be thanked for their considerable efforts in negotiating the contract.

Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report

Lake Arapuni: 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.

Waikato District Plan: On the 7th of April, Ben Wilson presented at the hearing on the Country Living Zone for the Waikato District Plan, 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. However, 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.

Healthy Rivers PC1: The Waikato Regional Council notified their decision on 22 April to adopt the Commissioner's Recommendations on PC1 with minor changes. 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.

Ohinewai 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. 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.

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.

Whanganui River: 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.

Shifting the game bird season: As you can imagine F&G 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.

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