

[REDACTED]

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 10 December 2023

1. Councillor Barnes provided an update on the Governance Review emphasizing that the Review had been coordinated by DOC and thus the reports produced were DOC's rather than Fish & Game's. The review report was "sitting on DOC's table" and nothing was going to happen in a hurry as DOC had other priorities. He suggested that the Minister of Conservation was unlikely to force the review this close to the national elections. Therefore, it was up to individual Fish & Game regions to implement the recommended changes as they see fit.
2. Councillors discussed the staff report on the game regulations and invited visitors to speak on their remits. After discussion, it was agreed to accept the staff recommendations. The changes to the game regulations for the 2023 season are:
 - Every person who hunts or kills game shall make all reasonable efforts to retrieve game they have shot as soon as is practicable after shooting it.
 - No person is allowed to shoot at game if they have no means of retrieving it.
 - No person may shoot game from any unmoored boat on the Waikato River south of the boat ramp at the confluence of the Mangawara Stream and the Waikato River at Taupiri to the Shakespeare St bridge in Cambridge for the duration of the open season.
 - The shooting hours shall be from 6.30am to 6.15pm, except the hunting of paradise shelduck and pukeko on 18 February to 19 February 2024 will be from 6.30am to 8.00pm.
 - Shoveler duck have a separate limit and are no longer included in a combined limit with mallard and grey ducks.
3. An email from Mr Ian Hazlewood was tabled requesting that there should be limits placed on the number of shooters coming onto the Piggott Wetland during the first two weeks of the game season. Councillors agreed that this was not advisable because:
 - Council land was public land.
 - Itinerant hunters could only shoot from fixed stands.
 - Pond holders were subsidized by general licence income.
4. Councillor Barnes summarised the outcome of the recent NZC meeting. He reminded Councillors that the Chairman Ray Grubb had recently resigned. The Executive Committee was comprised of himself, Greg Duley and Dean Phibbs.
5. It was agreed that the NZC be advised that Council supported an extension to the exemption of .410 shotguns from the lead shot restrictions.
6. Councillor Williamson recommended that staff coordinate a restoration project on Lake Waikare with other agencies including iwi, DOC and other interested parties. Mr Klee replied that such a project was already well underway, and that he would provide an update at the next Council meeting.

Matters Arising from the Chief Executive's Report

Game Bird Hunting Regulation Review: David Klee has prepared the game regulations review which is available on the website (Game Bird Hunting Regulation Review 2022).

Pheasant hunter survey: In the past we have not phoned surveyed hunters in August. This year John Dyer surveyed 121 gamebird hunters in August, and found that 45 had hunted pheasants this year (37%).

Fish releases: Triploid trout were released in Lake Arapuni on 14 October 2022.

Healthy Rivers: Environment Court assisted mediation on Healthy Rivers (Plan Change 1 for the Waikato catchment) is well in progress. The mediation process is confidential to allow for full and frank discussions without prejudice. Our consultants, Sarah Ongley and Helen Marr are excellent, and we are the main opposition to those parties seeking much less stringent conditions for wetlands and lakes.

Whangamarino Weir Section 128 Review: The process has stalled somewhat whilst we await updated and accurate LIDAR data to complete the technical assessment.

Pokaiwhenua River: Adam has begun preparing a restoration and access plan for the Pokaiwhenua River.

Matarangi Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP): Clare Robertson submitted on the Matarangi WWTP consent application. We are concerned that the District Council intends to continue operating the Matarangi WWTP with no upgrades to the plant for the next five years.

Solar Farm: We were contacted by Glenegy to consult on their proposal to establish an Energy Farm on the shores of Lake Whangape. The main concerns at this stage will be any impact the proposal might have on Lake Whangape which is a significant waterfowl hunting area.

Fish and Game Comprehensive consent application: Staff have put in a significant amount of time and effort addressing requirements of a Waikato Regional Council request for further information on our comprehensive consent application to undertake routine management of our wetlands. An updated consent application, including management plans for fish, birds and bats has been submitted alongside some suggested conditions.

Te Aroha Wetland Restoration Project: David Klee has secured a total budget of \$91,000 of funding and in-kind contributions from a variety of sources for this project to date. We have engaged consultants *Collaborations* to complete the first part of the project.

ABCD Flax Block: David had a meeting with Ken Brown (DOC) and Kenny Growden (WRC) to discuss the situation at the Flax Block Wetland and surrounding environments. It was a production meeting and we managed to find agreement on many points.

Site Visits to potential wetland restoration sites: David has had 2 meetings with landowners wishing to restore wetland habitat on their properties. He has started developing project plans for one of the sites which would encompass approximately 20ha of stream, remnant forest fragments and 11ha of wetland restoration. The total project cost is estimated to be close to \$500,000 and multiple funding applications are planned for next year.

Botulism: David gave a presentation on botulism prevent and management plans for Waipa DC WWTP and parks/rec teams.

Audit: The annual audit of our accounts and operational work plans were carried out by Owen McLeod and Co Ltd. The auditor was in the office for much of 2-weeks. This is not just a financial audit but also an operational audit with the Auditor requesting copies of the raw data for the banding programme, fish surveys, and copies of RMA submissions etc.

Firearms licensing bill: John Dyer made a comprehensive submission on the new firearms licensing bill, which is now before a Select Committee.