

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE 209th MEETING OF THE EASTERN FISH AND
GAME COUNCIL, HELD AT ROTORUA OFFICES OF FISH & GAME NEW
ZEALAND ON SATURDAY 10 AUGUST 2024 AT 11.00 AM**

Present

Crs. Mark Sceats, Debbie Oakley, Lindsay Lyons, Kevin Coutts, Alan Simmons Jay Tapsell, and Murray Ferris.

In attendance

Arash Alaeinia, (Eastern Fish & Game); and Barry Roderick.

1.0 WELCOME AND KARAKIA

1.1 Cr Mark Sceats opened the meeting at 11.59am welcoming all present.

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 Apologies were received from Crs Mike Jarvie, and Scott Nicol.

2.2 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that the apologies for the 209th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [24/08/2.2]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (30 MAY 2024)

3.1 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Debbie Oakley) that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [24/08/3.1]*

3.2 IDENTIFICATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN COUNCIL POLICY

No items were identified for inclusion in Council policy from the minutes of the meeting held 30 May 2024.

3.3 MATTERS ARISING

Alan Simmons raised his concern over the decision at the previous meeting to reduce the number of Councillors, which he was unfortunately not present at.

4.0 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

Kevin Coutts – Okataina Access for Opening

Kevin Coutts – Lack of staff and public at Council meeting

Lindsay Lyons – Okataina

Debbie Oakley – Weekend meetings

Lindsay Lyons – Zebra mussels

Chair concluded that there are only 3 items for General Business, Ōkataina, Weekend Council meetings and Zebra Mussels.

5.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER

5.1 Councillors were asked to inform the chair of any conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest were recorded.

6.0 HEALTH & SAFETY

6.1 Concern raised by Cr Kevin Coutts on the safety of our staff when responding to compliance call outs, noting a recent situation where there were multiple youths and two officers attended and a knife was produced. Arash acknowledged the situation but informed Council that five officers attended, and the knife was produced as it was being used as part of the fishing tools. Arash reassured Council that the staff are well trained in CERT and use several techniques to assess the threat situation and will always retreat or not engage if the threat level is high or increases.

6.2 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Kevin Coutt/) that Council receives the Health and Safety report. [24/08/6.2]*

7.0 REDUCTION OF EASTERN REGION SUB REGIONS

7.1 Councillors engaged in a brief discussion on this topic, confirming the rules as set out in the Conservation Act, adding that the Council could allocate additional representation of a Councillor for a particular sub-region should only one person be voted in for that that sub region in the election. Discussion was also had about the communications needed to promote the election, Arash updated Council on the plan that was in place by NZC to communicate with licence holders and encourage them to engage.

7.2 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Jay Tapsell) that Council confirms its decision to reduce Eastern Fish and Game subregions from six to three being;*
Subregion 1 - Central Lakes (Rotorua Lakes & Taupo)
Subregion 2 – Western Bay (Tauranga & Whakatane)
Subregion 3 – East coast – Gisborne & Wairoa). [24/08/7.2]
Five voted in favour, Alan Simmons against, Mark Sceats abstained.

8.0 2024-2025 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

8.1 –No further discussion occurred over the 2024-25 Operational Workplan.

8.2 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Kevin Couatts) that Council approves the proposed Operational Work Plan and budget for the 2024-2025 year, and delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer to approve expenditure during the year as set out in the Council approved Operational Work Plan and budget. [24/08/8.2]*

9.0 SPECIES MONITORING REPORTS

9.1 Council requested for the report to highlight the catch rates on Lake Rotorua through Fish per Hour as it did for the other lakes. Also, there was some question on the validity that Soft Bait was the highest performing technique for Rotorua. Arash advised that he would review with the Fisheries team and provide an update to Council.

9.2 *Agreed (Alan Simmons/Mark Sceats) that Council receives the summary for the 2023-24 Summer Creel Survey. [24/08/9.2]*

10.0 FLUORIDE AND POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON TROUT

10.1 Cr Alan Simmons spoke to the point and informed Council of his measures to take readings at different points around the lake. He will keep F&G informed of his findings. It was agreed that Eastern Fish & Game will seek any information or updates that MPI may have on the impact of Fluoride on Trout and to monitor any new international papers on the issue.

Council appreciated the work and efforts that Cr Simmons was undertaking in monitoring the fluoride impact but asked that in all his communications and interactions with agencies he operate as a member of the public and not as a Councillor representing Fish & Game as F & G view at this point is neutral.

11.0 WAIKAREMOANA NAVIGATIONAL MARKERS

11.1 Cr Murray Ferris brought the Council up to date with the history of this application and the positive impact the funding will have for safety. It was also acknowledged that this support is helping the wider community of all lake users and will be seen as Fish & Game contributing to the community.

- 11.2 ***Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Kevin Coutts) that Council supports The Waikaremoana Boating & Fishing Associations application for funding of up to \$15,500, subject to receiving appropriate detailed information of the navigational markers, sites identified for the markers, installation details and appropriate permission from Tuhoe and Department of Conservation. [24/08/11.2]***
- 12.0 Council adjourned for lunch at 12.04pm reconvening at 12.22pm.
- 13.0 **OPERATIONAL REPORTS**
Finance Report
- 13.1 Council queried code 1450 on page 25 of a spend YTD of \$3,694 when the budget was \$500. Arash Alaeinia confirmed he would look into and provide details to Council.
- 13.2 ***Agreed (Kevin Coutts/Murray Ferris) that Council receives the finance report approves payments for May and June 2024 totalling \$305,270.22. [24//08/13.2]***
Management Report
- 13.3 Council acknowledged the amount of work and detail that Matthew McDougall puts into his Game Bird reporting for Council. Some Councillors asked if the detail could be omitted as they viewed the information as too science data based and that the majority of readers just want the outputs and not the workings out. Arash explained that for transparency it was good practice to include the calculations and science behind the decision and that some hunters appreciate the detail and actually cross check the calculations. It was suggested that the summary be in the Council report and the full report to be in the Papers for Information.
A discussion was also had about Council's current policy on setting game bird bag limits and season length. Arash reminded Council that they were given the opportunity to review this Policy last year and accepted to continue with the current policy, unfortunately Cr Mark Sceats was absent from that meeting.
Concern was raised that our hunters do not see value for money for their licence with low bag limits and short seasons, and this is putting a number of hunters off renewing their licences.
- 13.5 ***Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Jay Tapsell) that Council receives the Management Report. [24//08/13.5]***
Licence Sales Report
- 13.6 Concern was raised by Cr Lindsay Lyons that year on year our licence sales our on the decline and our fees our rising. Lindsay was pleased to see a marketing planning discussion had taken place at the Eastern offices from information that was on the whiteboard. Lyndsay also brought up an opportunity to promote fishing from jet skis as this has a lower cost than owning a boat, yet you can still be out in the lake catching great fish.
Arash informed Council that the team had discussed a marketing plan, that covered promoting licence sales pre the 15 Aug sales date, Facebook campaigns that were planned (take a mate fishing etc), news articles being sent to the media and magazines. Arash also informed Council of Ian Hadland's recent visit to the US to attend an International R3 conference for Fisheries and Hunters and his presentation to the managers was that there is a global decline in these activities, but best to promote to families and we needed to review our Licence category pricing.
Council also asked if we had any knowledge of Taupo's licence sales, Arash to follow up.
- 13.7 ***Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that Council receives the Licence Sales Report. [24/08/13.7]***

14.0 LIAISON OFFICERS REPORTS

14.1 Report from Bay of Plenty Conservation Board

No Report

14.2 Report from Department of Conservation

No Report

14.3 Report from New Zealand Council

Cr Debbie Oakley's report covered:

CEO Corina Jordan and Barrie Barnes are scheduling a meeting with DoC Taupo to discuss the Licence platform that they use. At the last TEFAC meeting licence fee increase was discussed. The Minister for H&F will be attending the next NZC meeting in August and plans to visit all Regional F&G Councils over the course of the following 12 months. Cr Mark Sceats is attending the next NZC meeting as Debbie will be away and Minister has asked for a question from each region. NZC is looking at changes to the Conservation Act and some centralisation work that would help reduce costs for the organisation. Corina Jordan and Barrie Barnes meet with the Minister every 2 months and the Ministers office has full time staff from DOC who work on Hunting and Fishing issues.

15.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

15.1 Lake Okataina

Council had a very robust discussion on the continued and no firm outcome of guaranteed seven days a week access to Lake Ōkātina. Cr Sceats updated the Council on some recent communications with the Ministers office and the outcomes of those communications also highlighting the staff turnover that he encountered in his period of communications. He also updated Council on the work that NZC were doing in raising this concern to the Minister too. Concern was raised by the Council over the lack of engagement and any consequence for a pole and chain erected on the boat ramp which is a RLC asset and the access being controlled by an entity that has no statutory authority to do so.

Arash updated the Council in his communications that he had engaged in and future appointments that he had scheduled with RLC CEO to discuss F&G concern, as we approach the licence sale period and the opening.

Council was reminded that we need to maintain a relationship with all iwi for long term sustainability of access and being able to manage our fisheries.

Council accepted that the issue needs to be managed by the minister and is not within the capacity of F&G.

Access for the coming season was discussed, Arash was positive that access would be available as long as all necessary MPI regulations were adhered to. MPI was carrying out a review of the Ōkātina CAN and would update all stakeholders once completed. This was behind schedule due to an accident of the person tasked with carrying out the review.

15.2 Staff/Weekend meetings

Cr Coutts asked the value of having weekend meetings, as the purpose was to stimulate more general public to attend our meetings. Also he pointed out that the meeting had no staff attending, who are able to add value to the Council meetings. Arash informed Council that the decision to have weekend meetings was not only to stimulate general public attendance but to help support Councillors who have full time jobs and have to take time off to attend Council meetings. Arash acknowledged that his team are already time poor and stacking not only holidays but time in lieu for hours worked so he does not expect them to attend weekend or evening meetings. Crs Coutts and Oakley

requested that meetings return to weekdays. It was accepted that the new Council will also have an oversight over this request moving forward for the next year.

15.3 *Zebra Mussels*

Cr Lyons and Barry Roderick expressed the concern over this possible threat currently in other countries and the devastation that it could bring to our waterways and fisheries. Arash is to follow up with other regional managers if they are aware and with MPI.

16.0 PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION

16.1 *Council agreed that there was no need to have a Public Excluded Meeting.*

17.0 MEETING CLOSED

17.1 Cr Mark Sceats closed the meeting 1.58 pm.



.....
Mark Sceats
Chairman

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.2 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that the apologies for the 209th meeting of the Eastern Region Fish and Game Council be sustained. [24/08/2.2]*

3.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (30 MAY 2024)

3.1 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Debbie Oakley) that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2024 be confirmed as a true and correct record. [24/08/3.1]*

6.0 HEALTH & SAFETY

6.2 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Kevin Coutt) that Council receives the Health and Safety report. [24/08/6.2]*

7.0 REDUCTION OF EASTERN REGION SUB REGIONS

7.2 *Agreed (Murray Ferris/Jay Tapsell) that Council confirms its decision to reduce Eastern Fish and Game subregions from six to three being;*

Subregion 1 - Central Lakes (Rotorua Lakes & Taupo)

Subregion 2 - Western Bay (Tauranga & Whakatane)

Subregion 3 - East coast - Gisborne & Wairoa). [24/08/7.2]

Five voted in favour, Alan Simmons against, Mark Sceats abstained.

8.0 2024-2025 OPERATIONAL WORK PLAN

8.2 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Kevin Coutts) that Council approves the proposed Operational Work Plan and budget for the 2024-2025 year, and delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer to approve expenditure during the year as set out in the Council approved Operational Work Plan and budget. [24/08/8.2]*

9.0 SPECIES MONITORING REPORTS

9.2 *Agreed (Alan Simmons/Mark Sceats) that Council receives the summary for the 2023-24 Summer Creel Survey. [24/08/9.2]*

11.0 WAIKAREMOANA NAVIGATIONAL MARKERS

11.2 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Kevin Coutts) that Council supports The Waikaremoana Boating & Fishing Associations application for funding of up to \$15,500, subject to receiving appropriate detailed information of the navigational markers, sites identified for the markers, installation details and appropriate permission from Tuhoe and Department of Conservation. [24/08/11.2]*

13.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

13.2 *Agreed (Kevin Coutts/Murray Ferris) that Council receives the finance report approves payments for May and June 2024 totalling \$305,270.22. [24/08/13.2]*

13.5 *Agreed (Lindsay Lyons/Jay Tapsell) that Council receives the Management Report. Licence Sales Report*

13.7 *Agreed (Mark Sceats/Murray Ferris) that Council receives the Licence Sales Report. [24/08/13.7]*

16.0 PUBLIC EXCLUDED SESSION

16.1 *Council agreed that there was no need to have a Public Excluded Meeting.*