

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 7 JUNE 2022 AT 3.00PM AT COACHMAN HOTEL, 140 FITZHERBERT AVENUE, PALMERSTON NORTH.

1. **Present:**

Chairman Paul Dewar, Councillors Malcolm Francis, John Hancock, Jim Cook, Steve Brown, Aaron Passey, Don Scott, Colin Shore, Jennifer Yanko, Richard McIntyre, Prof. Stephen Haslett (Via Zoom Videoconferencing), Andrew McGregor, Paul Shortis (co-opted).

In Attendance:

Fish and Game Staff: Phil Teal, Dr Matt Kavermann

Licence Holder: Leigh Johnson

Welcome and Confirmation of Agenda

Chairman Dewar welcomed councillors and outlined the agenda for the meeting. He noted that the order of some items in the agenda may be changed – specifically receiving reports from Paul Shortis (Liaison with Wellington Conservation Board and Wairarapa Moana) and a brief presentation from Leigh Johnson regarding the Kapiti Women on the Fly programme.

2. **Apologies:**

Apologies were received from Hamish Carnachan, Paul Shortis (lateness 3:10pm), and Jim Cook (part meeting at 3.30pm for 30 minutes)

It was moved

that apologies be accepted

Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis

Carried

3. **Conflict of Interest**

The Conflicts of Interest Register was reviewed, and identification of additional conflicts were sought specific to the agenda.

Chairman Paul Dewar noted that he was President of Sports Fly Fishing NZ and that they used venues in the Wellington region for competition events.

Councillor Francis noted that the reference in the Conflict of Interest register as President of Kapiti Flyfishing Club could be removed and that he was still on the committee of the club.

Councillor McGregor noted that he was a standholder at Lake Wairarapa.

It was moved

That the Conflicts of Interest register be updated accordingly to note the changes for Paul Dewar, Malcolm Francis, and Andrew McGregor

Jim Cook/Aaron Passey

Carried

Mr Teal confirmed that the Conflict of Interest register was updated accordingly from the previous meeting, and Conflict of Interest Management plan was also updated with the new conflicts of interest that were identified and how Council intended to deal with managing a conflict.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting of 22 March 2022:

After brief discussion it was moved that

the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 22 March 2022 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Don Scott/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

5. Matters Arising:

Mr Teal confirmed that all the actions from the meeting of 22 March 2022 had been completed notably including:

- Seeking clarification for the Implementation Steering Group on the timetable of the implementation programme of the recommendations in the Ministerial Review of Governance of Fish and Game.
- The principal contestable fund applications from Wellington Fish and Game Council into the Fish and Game budget process were limited to CPI adjustments to salaries and vehicle running costs.
- Research relating to trout and native fish interaction in open systems be given priority in NZ Fish and Game Council co-ordinated research.
- Options were considered by staff relating to landing sites in or at the boundary of the REZ Rangitikei River.

Councillor Scott noted the discussions of the Petitions Committee relating to a private individual seeking trout farming using recirculating aquaponic systems for personal use. The Petitions Committee considered that they were not convinced that all risks could be eliminated and that further consideration may be made once the 2019 Aquaponics Strategy is more advanced.

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6. NZ Fish and Game Council Business

Councillor McIntyre provided an overview of activity at NZ Fish and Game Council:

- New Zealand Council has appointed Corina Jordan as Chief Executive starting on the 1 August 2022.
- For the Wildlife Act review there is a working group (which includes Richard McIntyre) and they are currently looking at the potential for co-management of indigenous species and customary harvest component. A new category of landholder licence is also being considered which has the potential for landowners to get a free licence which may allow for communications and dispersal of regulation guidance.
- NZ Council have had discussions on options for potential amalgamations resulting from the Ministerial Review - with a seven-region option (with Eastern region being separate) now being included in the considerations for wider consultation.
- A Communications Working Group has been working on a draft Communication Strategy – with principal input from staff Hamish Carnachan and Bruce Quirey (Otago). A key component that is also being developed is a Brands Strategy which defines the key elements of messaging for Fish and Game on how it wants to be represented to stakeholders and the wider public.

Mr Shortis arrived at 3:10pm

Further discussion ensued on Councillor McIntyre's report.

Councillor Scott sought discussion on reasons for consideration of establishing a 'landowner' licence:

- it's hard for Fish and Game to directly connect with landowners
- it provides a way to estimate harvest
- it provides a way to provide information to landowners including regulations information; and
- it must be no-charge as per current situation to ensure uptake.

Councillor Hancock noted that access for compliance for all rangers needed to remain without any unintended complications.

Dr Kavermann noted the subtle difference between the terms 'occupiers' note in the Wildlife and Conservation Acts and 'landowners' – which in many cases are the same but they have different meanings under legislation.

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Councillor McIntyre noted that there was no intention to charge for a licence and it must be a different specific occupier licence to differentiate from the current suite of Fish and Game licences.

Councillor Brown noted the discussion on the extent of use of reserves to partially or fully fund costs associated with the Ministerial Review implementation. This had been dealt with by NZ Council in their deliberations on budget process.

Councillor Haslett noted that he had provided a review of the paper originated by the Cawthron Institute and it was noted that the New Zealand Council executive should be undertaking a risk assessment of the study/studies but this had not progressed yet. Councillor Haslett offered his expertise in critiquing research (including statistically) which is his expertise - not necessarily the subject matter per se.

Mr Teal noted an urgency to see what progress had been made by Cawthron Institute in developing the suite of research and policy analysis for Freshwater Fish Futures – with the risk that Fish and Game will be excluded from the principal development of the projects and be restricted to commenting on minor amendments.

It was then moved that

the report on New Zealand Council business by Councillor McIntyre be received

Malcolm Francis/John Hancock

Carried

7. Public Forum

Chairman Dewar noted that there had been no items identified by the public not already included in the agenda.

8. Health and Safety Reporting

Mr Teal noted that staff had been reacting to different COVID-19 level restrictions by developing Health and Safety Plans for each level and then following the protocols recommended.

Mr Teal noted that he had made the Health and Safety meetings of weekly frequency to deal with a dynamic situation, and also provide an opportunity for more regular health and safety discussions/updates.

It was moved that

Council receives the Health and Safety Report for April and May 2022

Aaron Passey/Richard McIntyre

Carried

9. Draft Annual Budget and Licence Fee Recommendation

Discussion ensued on the Licence Fee Recommendation including the following papers:

- *Fish and Game New Zealand Licence Fee Recommendation Consultation* by Brian Anderton (acting Chief Executive, NZ Council) undated.
- Email from Carmel Veitch (Chief Financial Officer, NZ Council) 20 May 2022 regarding advice on reserve status for the organisation and information on surpluses from 2020/21 Financial Year.
- Memorandum: *Designated Waters Licence Category*. NZ Council staff. Undated.
- Letter to regional Fish and Game Council Chairs from Ray Grubb (Chairman, NZ Council) undated – *Funding Provision for Implementation of the Ministerial Review and the Resource Allocation Project* - outlining the broad areas of expenditure that might be required for implementation of the Ministerial Review recommendations.
- Supplementary Policy Advice Paper – *Increase to NR Licence Fee & Designated Waters Licence Category* Jack Kós (Senior Policy Advisor, NZ Council) 19 May 2022.

It was noted that the use of the proposed total budget of \$500,000 for implementing the Ministerial Review recommendations is proposed to come from reserves rather than licence fee increase. Councillor Haslett noted that it did not appear prudent to approve the funding for Change Consultants without a detailed brief or budget confirmation.

Councillor Brown questioned how the Non-Resident licence fee level was derived. It was noted that it was primarily based on the principle of increasing the income from Non-Resident licence holders to cover operational costs. Mr Shortis noted that the New Zealand licence holder supports Non-Resident anglers through regional and district rates and general taxpayer contributions. The Non-Resident license holder essential covers the costs of resource use only. The other side of the argument is that a proportion of Non-Resident licence holders may contribute very little as low level (value) tourist(s). Councillor Francis noted examples of overseas tourist packages that cover all New Zealand accommodation (owned by overseas interests) and gear supplied – with the total income to NZ being the licence fee and eating costs.

Councillor Brown suggested that we should try and work out what the extra cost is for the Non-Resident licence holder. Mr Shortis considered it preferable to view from a wider perspective as to what occurs in overseas

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examples, what the perceived value is, and what the market can sustain. The wider principle of considering similar situation overseas using non-resident licence categories resulted in the fee being set at \$250 for an adult whole season licence. Councillor Hancock did not believe that \$250 is not price sensitive to genuine tourist anglers.

Councillor Francis considered that North Island anglers had to contend with purchasing two licences – a Fish and Game licence and a Taupo licence – which was collectively quite a lot of money for older anglers on fixed income.

Councillor McIntyre considered that to limit the price increase of licences to less than inflation can have lasting effects on income – as inflation devalues the income. He further noted that from experience the Minister of Conservation (in conjunction with advice from Treasury) will also likely limit increases greater than CPI - should that be required in the future.

After further discussion Council resolved the following:

The 2022/23 adult whole season sports fish licence fee be set at \$145 and the adult whole season game licence be set at \$107 (inclusive of the \$5 Game Bird Habitat Stamp) with appropriate proportional changes to other NZ resident licence categories.

Don Scott/Malcolm Francis

Carried

The addition of a \$5 fee for sea run salmon licence endorsement does not materially affect the Wellington region and defers these considerations and decisions to South Island regions - where it is relevant.

Don Scott/Jim Cook

Carried

The 2022/23 non-resident whole season sports fish licence fee be set at \$250 and the appropriate proportional changes are made to other non-resident licence categories.

Malcolm Francis/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

The proposal and concept to establish a new licence category for endorsements for Designated Waters Licence was not opposed outright. Wellington Council did not wish to pursue recommending a waterway as a 'designated waterway' for the 2022/2023 season. Wellington Council seeks deferral of introduction until at least next year to allow an objective consideration of purposes and principles in establishing

designated waters and to be considered in more detail in conjunction with other methods proposed to manage pressure sensitive waters.

Paul Dewar/Aaron Passey

Carried

Further discussion ensued on how Wellington region would define 'designated waters'. Councillor Brown considered that it would intuitively include headwater fisheries with the motivations for anglers being clear water and potentially large fish. He noted that from tagging studies the generally accepted lifespan of a trout might be 5 – 7 years but he cited examples of tag reports of fish being 10 to 15 years old – potentially increasing sensitivity for trout removal. He noted the logic and concept of slot limits (maximum size fish) to limit overfishing of large fish to maintain sustainability in headwater fisheries. Councillor Passey also noted overseas examples where tag limits can be used as a control to take a fish.

Chairman Dewar considered that Council should define the principles and logic used to designate waters as being sensitive waters and if regions amalgamated then there could be some consistency in approach. Dr Kavermann queried the main purpose of the \$50 fee – was it to control pressure (which is not the outcome in many North American waters) or as a revenue earner. He postulated that if it is designated as a 'special fishing water' then there is an element of prestige attached to the site(s), there may be additional cashflow to manage, or the increased interest in the site(s) may increase fishing pressure that may reduce the values of the fisheries. Councillor McIntyre conceded that by designating a water it could put them on a 'bucket list' to catch a fish in those waters.

Chairman Dewar concluded that Council needs more time to consider the implications of designating sites and the logic used if that concept was proceeded with in the Wellington region – but it was not going to be considered for this upcoming season.

Discussion ensued on the proposed \$500,000 fund allocated to the implementation of the Ministerial Review in the draft National Budget. It was viewed as a material budget figure – yet no formal business plan had been developed or consulted on. The principle of defining an indicative budget was understood, but until a formal business plan had been approved by NZ Council, and consulted with the wider organisation, there was not a high enough degree of transparency and demonstration of good governance for this approach to be unconditionally ratified Wellington Fish and Game Council.

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Councillor Scott objected that the licence holder has to pay for a decision made by government and that a submission should be made to government for a grant in aid.

After discussion it was moved that

Council considered that a formal and detailed business plan was required to be developed and approved before the proposed \$500,000 budget for implementation of the Ministerial Review recommendations could be supported and approved in the 2022/23 budget.

Therefore Council recommended that the money provisionally allotted to the implementation project(s) be deferred for final approval and inclusion in the budget until a business plan was presented and agreed to.

Steve Haslett/Malcolm Francis

Carried

10. **Regional Anglers Notice**

Councillor Brown considered that looking ahead, the acceptance of public support for the social license to fish included aspects of animal welfare. With the use of social media videos, Fish and Game need to consider mitigating practices where it may be perceived to be disadvantageous to fish – and this may include the use of treble hooks. He considered that trout have sensitive mouths and he questioned how much damage do treble hooks do? And is the catch rate any better anyway? He considered this not an issue to debate at this meeting but a longer-term consideration for the effects on the animals.

Councillor Francis also shared some concern regarding potential damage to a fish's mouth and noted that there were a number of rivers with size restrictions that required catch and release practices. This risked damaging a fish's mouth and could potentially be sub-lethal, and he agreed there should be a considered debate based on science to consider the potential issues of using treble hooks.

Councillor Scott noted that there had been some helpful evidence presented in scientific papers in recent years regarding use of treble hooks that concluded that they caused no adverse harm compared with single hooks and posed no additional risk of harm.

Chairman Dewar confirmed that Council was only considering restrictions on the use of treble hooks on rivers where size limits existed.

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Councillor Cook noted that evidence from Taupo fishery investigations that fish with injured jaws were still in healthy condition – so it had not conclusively affected its feeding ability nor general health.

Councillor McIntyre noted that Fish and Game need to fully consider the ethical issues relating to animal welfare – and whether there are or are not any lasting physiological effects – if a fish has a hole in the mouth, it is hard to justify that it has a neutral or positive experience. This is particularly relevant if Fish and Game change focus from a harvest principle as part of population management and look at the ethical acceptability of catch and release practices.

Council considered specific recommendations on remits/issues. The current situation for the Kauwhata River is that it is open for winter fishing, which is inconsistent with adjoining catchments. Councillor Francis noted that Waikanae River had spawning seen throughout its extent - from mid-river at Jim Cooke Park to higher spawning sites in the headwaters. Councillor McIntyre considered that there needs to be a consistency of logic applied to defining regulations.

After further discussion it was moved that

Regulations relating to the Kauwhata River remain unchanged

Jim Cook/Don Scott

Carried

Councillor Passey sought clarification that other tributaries emanating from the Ruahine Ranges could be open for winter fishing if a consistency of logic was applied. Councillor Scott noted that some of the headwater sites are also considering key spawning sites for a sub-catchment or contribution to the wider catchment. Dr Kavermann concurred that the extent of spawning and value of the tributary to the contribution to the overall fishery needs to be considered. A conservative approach to protect many of the spawning streams comes at the expense of limiting some opportunity.

Dr Kavermann also noted that transparent logic is used so that external agencies see consistency in protection and use of spawning streams should apply to harvest as well as other activities such as flood control works.

After further discussion it was moved that

Staff look at the feasibility of opening up waters closed for fishing during winter fishing period

Aaron Passey/Steve Brown

Carried

3 Against

Malcolm Francis/
Paul Dewar/
Richard McIntyre

Council considered the current bag limits for Kopuaranga River to align the fish limit to two (2) per day – the same as the mainstem of the Ruamahanga – but is to align with other similar fisheries rather than specific biological issues on this tributary.

Councillor McIntyre noted that there should be some consistency in defining the regulations and questioned why a differential in bag limits developed – unless there was evidence of a separate population to the mainstem of the river.

After further discussion it was moved that

The current bag limits for the Kopuaranga River be amended to two (2) fish per day to align with the mainstem fishing regulations for the Ruamahanga River.

Colin Shore/Malcolm Francis

Carried

Council considered the ongoing use of treble hooks in rivers with size limit restrictions. It was noted that Wellington region is the only region to have a limit on the use of treble hooks and that focus needed to be on demonstrable impacts on the fisheries. Currently where size limit restrictions apply, there is still the use of treble hooks, but the proposal is to ban the use of treble hook where a slot limit applied. Councillor Scott questioned whether treble hooks were more successful in catching fish and whether they cause any increase rate of potential injury to fish – scientific papers considered in the recent past were rather inconclusive in proving differences either way.

After further discussion on the reason for consideration was to minimise perceived potential damage it was moved

Wellington Council to adopt a ban on the use of treble hooks within rivers with slot (size) limits in the Wellington region

Paul Dewar/Steve Brown

Carried

Council considered the possibility of relaxing the number of sports fish that could be taken in Lake Wairarapa – with particular consideration on having a four fish limits on course fish (perch). The lake bed will be gifted back to the iwi as part of the Treaty Settlement and iwi may believe that to improve lake water quality that increasing the bag limits of perch. The latter is making the assumption that changes in harvest is or would be additive mortality in population terms. Councillor Francis noted the complexity of biomanipulations regarding links in

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food webs and potential for predator switching. The issues regarding the long-term effect are debatable as shown by research on Barton's Lagoon where large scale removal of perch removed large proportion of protein available to eels. Councillor Passey noted that the initial harvest level may be quite high, but the population numbers might initially decrease then bounce back when harvest pressure (success rate) decreases.

Dr Kavermann sought feedback as to whether Council would consider increasing the daily limit for perch in Lake Wairarapa. Councillor Passey noted that it may strengthen our position in being prepared to consider options for management outcomes.

Councillor Cook consider that Council should at least look at options to increase limits to manage a risk, which would include not taking the fish by nets.

To initiate discussion on options it was moved that

A no limit on perch option be considered for the anglers notice if caught on rod and running line

Jim Cook / --

Dr Kavermann noted that currently sports fish are subject to potential management interventions identified in the draft Conservation Restoration Plan, and Fish and Game need to ensure how management actions are or aren't being monitored for effectiveness. It was agreed that while there may be a willingness to move on lifting limits that the recommendation that this would be considered once the draft legislation and proposed functions of the Wairarapa Moana Statutory Board had been finalised. Council encouraged staff to continue discussion of management options with Dr Stewart (Cawthron Institute) and how Fish and Game can contribute.

Councillor Cook withdrew his motion and it was subsequently moved that
Wellington Fish and Game Council consider requests by Dr Stewart on changing bag limits once the legislative process has progressed and how Fish and Game can contribute to management outcomes confirmed in the Conservation Restoration Plans.

Steve Haslett/Aaron Passey

Carried

Vote recorded against John Hancock

Consideration was given to how to collaborate with neighbouring regions to align their sport fish regulations, whether or not amalgamations proceeded. It was generally agreed that there should be a consistency in approach using

sound harvest and population management principles and goals. Dr Kavermann noted that he could look at the consistent approaches and identify any compromises that might need to be considered to make the regulation guide and Anglers Notice, between two or more regions, similar. It was agreed to develop a list of principles over the next twelve months with staff to look at future recommendations to change regulations.

11. Wairarapa Moana Governance - Update

Mr Shortis gave an overview of the Wairarapa Moana Governance Group - which was established in 2009 as a non-legal entity – essentially in response to Treaty settlement process. More recently Greater Wellington Regional Council and DOC (as members of the group) have secured funding for a restoration projects. Fish and Game were not given membership in 2009, but were given observer status in 2011. Other groups are permitted to attend meetings at the discretion of the Chair but do not have any formal speaking rights and no voting rights. Increasingly the group is being treated as losing its relevance as the next phase of the Treaty Settlement (once legislation has been passed) will see a Statutory Reserve Board established – presumably once the legislation has passed before the end of 2022 calendar year. The Statutory Reserve Board will comprise a similar mix of members (DOC, GWRC, South Wairarapa DC, and four Kahungunu representatives and one Rangitaane representative). Everyone else including Fish and Game is left out of formal participation on the Reserves Board.

The first draft of the Treaty Settlement Bill states for the Statutory Reserve Board to have control over all fish in the lake. The Fish and Game submission to the select committee was accepted and asked for recognition of Fish and Game’s statutory management role in managing sports fish and potential for a special advisory status on the Reserve Board.

The Wairarapa Moana Governance Group recently commissioned the development of a Restoration Plan (3 Year timeframe) – which was largely aspirational but had one reference to removal and eradication or control of trout and perch in the moana. It was noted that there was wide consultation with iwi groups.

In moving forward – there will be clarification on whether there will be a slot of advisory representation, a clarification on the dichotomy of two legislative tools, but still no mention of the potential effects on hunting (if any).

There is a potential or perceived view that there could tension occurring regarding fish management. However, Wairarapa Moana is not a major recreational fishery per se, with the inflowing rivers lower Ruamahanga and Tauherenikau rivers may be important contributors to fishery values, but the

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lake and surrounds are significant hunting areas. If restrictions to all access for waterfowl hunting occurs then this could affect sustainability objectives or even change primary objectives to control gamebirds in the vicinity.

In order to maintain hunting areas Fish and Game could choose to not defend the removal of fish species in the lake (as is the current Council position made in 2012). This would allow Fish and Game to support a principal focus on improving the lake water quality and habitat values, and would also meet the aspirations of the iwi to reinstate a sustainable eel fishery. Fish and Game would still be seeking retention of waterfowl hunting on the lake.

Fish and Game needs to continue to be recognised as an advisory group - as a major group involved in resource management and representation of recreational users.

There is still a need to improve the Upper Ruamahanga and continue to develop a working relationship with iwi.

If there is still a need for any removal of fish species, then this is to be done on scientific based research/advice and not continuing with management actions that have caused unintended consequences on food webs – fish interactions, bittern, such as observed in Barton’s Lagoon. The resulting management regime must be based on sound science principles incorporating matauranga (maori knowledge).

There is a balancing act in determining the direction post treaty settlement. Regardless of the outcome of any submissions in the legislative process, it is recommended that Wellington Fish and Game Council consider that it doesn’t defend the lake as a significant fishery but maintain as a significant hunting area. The other risk could be, does this set up a precedent for other waters?

Councillor Francis noted the potential risk in other non-statutory Conservation Plans such as the Waikanae River Conservation Plan – where there has been no public input/consultation into the management actions or the formulation of the Plan – i.e. there is a risk that fish removal from one site can be used to justify removal of an introduced species at another site.

Mr Shortis considered that there a series of discussions required with iwi on clean water quality, and more water quantity.

Chairman Dewar indicated that policy on sports fish removal and should have been developed to help in this current debate.

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It was agreed that Wellington Fish and Game Council would see how the submission to the enabling legislation to the Treaty Settlement progressed – then it may require a zoom meeting to work out what tactics are required to determine leverage. Regardless of that outcome of the legislation process, there was a strong desire to work with iwi to improve the freshwater environments.

After further discussion it was moved that

Wellington Fish and Game requests that NZ Council give more urgency to the consideration of development of national policy regarding the removal of sports fish from waters (original briefing note submitted in 2017)

Paul Dewar/Malcolm Francis

Carried

It was then moved that

The report from Mr Shortis on Wairarapa Moana Governance Group be received

Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis

Carried

Chairman Dewar thanked Mr Shortis for his work on the future management of Lake Wairarapa and his considered advice to Council regarding such.

Mr Shortis left at 5.40pm

12. Junior and Novice Participation/Retention Projects

Chairman Dewar welcomed Leigh Johnson to the meeting. Councillor Francis provided a brief overview of the efforts of Kapiti Fly Fishing Club to encourage more women into fishing and retaining their participation – by focusing on the Women on the Fly programme. He noted that the club was looking to expand the concept to all clubs in the Wellington region - with a view to run a workshop for women, run by women. He further noted that assistance for funding the weekend workshop would be sought from other angling clubs and that potential funding from Fish and Game to at least underwrite the initiative. He confirmed that the initiative driven by Leigh Johnson was receiving planning support from the Club and in due course a more formal proposal would be developed with funding requirements identified.

Leigh Johnson provided an overview of the of the Women on the Fly programme to date – as the programme initiator and coordinator. She outlined the various issues considered:

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- The benefits of improving mental health and wellbeing in undertaking the pursuit of angling.
- Postulated potential barriers as to why there aren't more women fishing.
- She had been reaching out her communications through social media and emails and has established a core of about 25 but concede this didn't include all potential participants that were currently interested.
- Leigh noted that the activities had included casting sessions on river days.
- Organising planned trips to Turangi (three undertaken to date).

The event being proposed is over a weekend with three days getting women involved – e.g. 30 women recently attended a Tongariro River event - where there was a different approach to sharing of ideas and support. She noted that Sarah Delaney (from New Zealand Fly Ferns) was present, and she acted as a superb role model for all participants.

Leigh Johnson noted that the development of the project planning was adaptive and organic (finding out what works) but the objective remains to get more women involved in the pursuit. She was seeking to get support in principle and to find out how Fish and Game could help logistically.

Councillor Scott noted that there were three ladies on the Committee of the Manawatu Freshwater Anglers, and they were all active anglers. He indicated support for the initiative, in that it is very consistent with what Fish and Game sought to achieve. He considered the 'angling experience' could be further developed to include other aspects of angling as a component – such as spin fishing techniques rather than solely fly fishing per se.

Councillor Brown supported the efforts and considered we should take the opportunity to identify actual or perceived barriers for women participating in the pursuit, and for joining clubs. This included trying to define exactly what the Kapiti Fly Fishing Club is doing differently that resonates and encourages participation.

Leigh Johnson considered initial events attended (such as the Turangi events) where there is transparency and support that is not necessarily manifested at male oriented club events.

Councillor Francis noted that Gordon Baker had been a huge asset as their club coach – so having access to quality teaching has been important.

Councillor McIntyre commended Leigh Johnson and the Kapiti Fly Fishing Club on what had been achieved already and thanked them for the contributions and energy provided to-date.

It was then moved that

Wellington Fish and Game Council agrees to support in principle the objectives and concepts of the Women on the Fly programme and look to consider how the Council can support the initiative once proposals are more fully developed

Paul Dewar/Jim Cook

Carried

Don Scott left the meeting at 5.58pm

13. Communications

Council considered the survey undertaken on readers preferences and opinions on the recent Fish and Game magazine (Fish edition in August 2021). Councillor Haslett considered the 2% readership response was not enough to provide evidence for maintaining current editorial direction nor strength to support change in editorial direction.

Councillor McIntyre sought advice on how there were ways to get a better response. Councillor Haslett noted that this was not a random selection (i.e. are those who didn't respond likely to respond the same) and that a response rate using reader response might need to be in the order of 70%-90%.

It was agreed to continue discussing communications items later in the meeting.

The meeting was suspended for dinner at 6.03pm.

Leigh Johnson left the meeting at 6.03pm.

The meeting reconvened at 6.45pm.

14. Ministerial Review of Fish and Game Governance update

Mr Teal gave an overview of the progress of work streams undertaken on behalf of the Implementation Steering Group and presentations made at NZ Council governance forum on 30 April – 1 May 2022 and at NZ Council meeting on those dates. He noted that there had been presentations on the following:

- Governance Review Programme
- Structure Review Group Report
- Strategic Planning and Risk Management

Chairman Dewar noted that he had had discussions with the Chairs of the neighbouring regions regarding a potential meeting of neighbouring Fish and

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Game regions. He explained that the Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Chair had indicated that they had not reached consensus for a decision on their preferred position – and there appeared to be a divergence of opinion at present. Chairman Dewar considered that all three lower North Island regions should be able to participate in discussions on what any proposals for amalgamations could mean. He noted any discussions should not assume any amalgamations had been decided – as they have not – and there is a formal consultation period to take place where the outcome cannot be seen as being pre-determined.

Discussion ensued on the need for regions to provide their feedback and make decisions accordingly. While there did not appear to be central Government political will currently to force decisions, it increases the risk that this may change if there is significant procrastination by regions. It was agreed to push on in trying to arrange a meeting of governors of the lower North Island regardless of whether Councils had formed a position of preferred outcome.

Councillor Passey noted that there had been discussion at the Fish and Game governors forum on 1 May 2022 that the concept of centralising income collection and distribution had been met with approval. It was noted that this had not been formally consulted on and was a significant issue that should have wider input into considering the pros and cons for the organisation.

15. Consultation Draft Wellington Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plan

Mr Teal noted that Wellington Region had a current draft of its 10-year plan – Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plan that was ready for consultation but had not progressed beyond socialising it with some iwi groups. Discussion was deferred on this item.

16. Project Report 1113 – River Control Trout Fishery Assessment (defer)

Mr Teal noted that the report was still in draft form and would be presented at the August Council meeting. In the interim, it maybe necessary to provide GWRC Flood Protection with a copy of the report to enable timely invoicing. Chairman Dewar indicated that if the report was required to be sent to GWRC by a certain date then he could sign off the final draft copy for circulation. It was then moved that

The Chairman be delegated authority to sign off a final draft report on Project 1113 River Control Trout Fishery Assessment should it be considered a requirement to circulate the report prior to the August Wellington Fish and Game Council meeting.

Malcolm Francis/Richard McIntyre

Carried

17. Licence Management – Update

Mr Teal provided an update on development the upgrade of the Licence Management System (ESL) – with various delays occurring in deadlines not being met. It was still anticipated that the updated system would be up and running prior to the start of the 2022/2023 fishing season.

Mr Teal also noted that there was a scoping exercise being undertaken to enable a research project to confirm licence category price points and their continued applicability.

18. R3 /Marketing

Mr Teal outlined the efforts of staff to provide positive messaging for the 2022 Game Season – with the pre-season newsletter, pre-season email communications, and weekly hunting reports providing relevant and timely information to licence holders.

Mr Teal also noted that email campaigns for Winter Fish season were undertaken but coincided with periods of inclement weather and swollen rivers. It was then moved

To receive the Marketing R3 report

Colin Shore/Jim Cook

Carried

19. Communications (continued)

Council further considered the survey undertaken on readers preferences opinions for the magazine. Councillor Cook sought clarification on the adverts and advertorials in the magazine and how those offset the total cost. He considered that Fish and Game should have more direct input into educating the licence holders what we do – rather than focusing on what makes it a commercial success (profit making) in relation to a good newsstand style magazine. He considered it a principal communications channel for Fish and Game. He further noted that most of previous licence holders (should) receive a copy – unlike the 30-40% of licence holders that don't even provide Fish and Game with emails let alone open them. Given that it was the principal communication tool for the organisation, he thought that there should be total transparency as to the breakdown of costs and income from the magazine.

After further discussion it was moved that

Wellington Fish and Game Council seek clarification from NZ Council a breakdown of costs and income of the Fish and Game NZ magazine to provide full transparency to regions.

Jim Cook/Malcom Francis

Carried

Councillor McIntyre noted that 'brand' and communications review at NZ Council should provide guidance on how to communicate with stakeholders and the wider public and whether it is working effectively.

20. **Action Plan for Healthy Rivers**

Mr Teal drew attention to Council some recent advisories by Ministry for the Environment including Environment Aotearoa 2022 summary which provides an overview environmental trends across the marine and freshwater environs.

Mr Teal noted that Fish and Game NZ had submitted on the NES requirements for requiring resource consents for any work undertaken to enhance degraded wetlands.

Mr Teal noted there is intent to better co-ordinate the Fish and Game regional approaches with templates for common regional positions and legal precedents.

21. **Regional Plan Updates**

One Plan – Plan Change 2 Environment Court Appeal:

Mr Teal noted the technical and planning consultants were developing risk matrices that guided management practices required, as an interim option. This approach was also being investigated for the Waikato Regional Council plan.

Greater Wellington Regional Plan:

Mr Teal noted that there was still a residual of consent orders being processed through the Environment Court – despite the principal agreements being reached several months ago.

Horizons – Freshwater Futures Update:

Mr Teal outlined that Horizons had started engagement to progress the Regional Plan review regarding NPS FM 2020. This involved an effort to define community values within Freshwater Management Units (FMUs). Wellington Fish and Game Council submitted a preliminary document outlining values associated with the sports fish and game bird resource and values associated with recreational activities associated with their harvest. He further outlined a submission form sent out to anglers and hunters to register their values associated with the resources in each FMU.

Regional Plan Approach for NPS FM 2020 Implementation:

Mr Teal drew attention of Council the likelihood of 16 regional councils/unitary authorities producing plan changes within a very short period in 2024.

It was then moved that

The report by Mr Teal on Regional Plan planning processes be received

Jim Cook/Aaron Passey

Carried

22. Wairarapa Water Irrigation Update

Mr Teal noted that no additional information had come forward to indicate a concerted renewed interest in the project.

23. GWRC Western Rivers Global consents

Mr Teal noted that no progress had been made by GWRC on engaging with iwi – therefore the Waikanae and Otaki rivers consents were being operated under their existing historical consents.

He noted that some work was progressed on the Hutt River and Waingawa River with the placement of groynes – as part of the ‘Shovel Ready – COVID funding’ climate resilience projects. GWRC do not require additional resource consents for these projects as they are progressing them under existing consent provisions.

24. Lake Wairarapa Update (continued)

Chairman Dewar confirmed that material discussion on this agenda item had been completed earlier in the meeting.

25. Research Update

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of the trout native fish interaction project – confirming that Ami Coughlan was progressing with the final draft of the thesis requirements manuscript. It is anticipated that two papers will result from this work and have formalised a contract with Dr Adam Canning to complete. Councillor Haslett offered to provide a critique of any statistical analysis within the papers.

It was then moved to

Receive the report on the Research Projects

Jim Cook/Colin Shore

Carried

26. Junior and Novice Participation/Retention Projects (continued)

Chairman Dewar sought feedback on the novice participation projects for game bird hunting – noting that three families had participated at Lake Omanu, and two had been placed during the start of the season at Yules Lagoon (Lake Wairarapa). Council extended its thanks to Jason Johnstone for his continued contribution in managing participation on Lake Omanu.

Draft and Unconfirmed

It was then moved that

The reports on novice participation in angling and game bird hunting be received

Colin Shore/Malcolm Francis

Carried

27. Application for Funding of Habitat Enhancement Project

Consideration was given to a funding request for creating wetlands on Papatahi farm at the southern end of Alsops Bay, Lake Wairarapa. After discussion it was moved to

To make a contribution of up to \$3000 (incl. GST) to the habitat works on Papatahi Farm from the Reparation Dedicated Reserve.

Malcolm Francis/Colin Shore

Carried

28. Access Management Issues Update

Mr Teal no progress had been made with NZDF on resolving helicopter access at the lower end of the Remote Experience Zone in the Upper Rangitikei River. Staff are continuing to investigate the level of flexibility of DOC to consider landing sites at the upper most site and lower most site on the REZ/Rangitikei River boundary. It was agreed that renewed efforts be made to the Conservation Board to amend the Management Plan to secure helicopter landing sites at the top end of the REZ and the lower end at the Otamateanui River junction.

It was noted that Erindale Forest had been opened up for access for first year and that the process that the forest managers had approved – provided more control to them than absolutely necessary.

Councillor Francis noted the pressures on access created by changes in land use – including urban intensification.

It was moved that

The report on access issues be received

Colin Shore/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

29. Management Report for the Period 12 March to 31 May 2022

Mr Teal provided an overview of the Management Report for the relevant period and provided clarification on a number of points.

A brief discussion ensued on the contribution of the local iwi Muaūpoko at Lake Horowhenua who removed hundreds of dead birds from the lake – most likely (but not confirmed) caused by a botulism outbreak in April. There

Draft and Unconfirmed

appear to be little agency support from the Regional Council and Department of Conservation in response to the mass avian mortalities. It was agreed to acknowledge the efforts of the iwi and to try and initiate a meeting to develop an emergency response plan for all agencies should this occur at this scale in the future.

After further discussion and clarifications it was moved that

Council receives the Management Report for period 1 February to 12 March 2022 be received.

Malcolm Francis/Richard McIntyre

Carried

30. Licence Sales Report – 1 September 2021 up to 31 May 2022

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of licence sales – cumulative sales for season to-date.

He noted that the fish licence sales for the 2021/2022 season for about the same as the previous year - about 7 LEQs less at the same time last year.

He also noted that the game licence sales for the 2022 game season were similar to last year at the same time – about 4 LEQs less than at the same time last year.

After brief discussion it was moved that

The licence sales reports for Fish Licence Sales 2021/2022 and Game Licence Sales as at 31 May 2022 be received

Jim Cook /Steve Brown

Carried

31. Expenditure Report/Financial Transactions

The summary of income to 31 May 2022 and expenditure to 30 April 2022 was considered.

Mr Teal confirmed that a vehicle expenses had been considerably higher than budget primarily due to the continued high costs of diesel.

Councillor Hancock commended Mr Teal on how the financial statements are presented to governors in an easy-to-understand manner – and allowed for further interrogation of detail if required.

After brief discussion it was then moved

Receive and Accept the Expenditure Reports to 30 April 2022 and Financial Transactions for March and April 2022.

Colin Shore/Jennifer Yanko

Carried

32. Correspondence / Media

Specific discussion occurred on the co-governance arrangements that Whanganui iwi are adopting to manage the Whanganui River as a separate legal entity.

33. Recognition and Contribution Awards

Potential recipients were discussed, and additional nominations called for consideration at future meetings. It was noted that we had a list of around twenty recognition awards nominated, and once the public meetings were not so constrained by COVID19 restrictions that this would be proactively completed at respective Council meetings.

34. Wellington Conservation Board Liaison

Councillor Cook provided an overview of the discussions and agenda at the Conservation Board meetings. He confirmed that there was a consensus that the two statutory bodies should get on better to provide relevant information and advocacy positions on various issues.

Councillor Cook noted that the Conservation Board had formally been the conduit for the nomination of Jane Donald for the recipient of the Loder Cup which recognises outstanding contributions to conservation. Wellington Fish and Game provided the background information and completed the administrative requirements to progress – but is not one of the conservation entities that can provide a formal nomination.

Councillor Cook noted that the Wellington Conservation Board was currently in the process of appointing a new Chairperson – which requires Ministerial approval, and this will be notified to Fish and Game in due course.

35. General Business

There was no general business identified at the start of the agenda – and no additional late items discussed.

There being no further items of general business the meeting was closed at 7.51pm.

Next Meeting to be held: Meeting on Tuesday, 9 August 2022 (location to be determined) at 3pm.

Chairman_____

Date_____