**NORTHLAND FISH & GAME COUNCIL**

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF A MEETING**

**HELD AT THE NORTHLAND FISH & GAME OFFICE**

**NELL PLACE, WHANGAREI**

**7.00 PM FRIDAY 6th JUNE 2014.**

**PRESENT:**

**Chairman:** Noel Birchall (Appointed)

**Councillors:** Kris Batelaan**,** Maurice Blyde, Phil Durham, Chris Lynch, Mike Newson, Wayne Pepper, Cameron Shanks.

**Conservation**

**Board Member:** Richard Robbins

**Staff:** Rudi Hoetjes (Manager), Fay Stodart (Office Administrator)

The Manager asked for nominations to appoint a Chairman for the Council meeting as Chairman Dave Nicholson was absent from the meeting.

**It was moved: *That Noel Birchall is duly appointed as Chairman for the meeting.***

***Mike Newson/ Wayne Pepper CARRIED.***

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the table.

**APOLOGIES:** Mason Elliott, Leo Leonard, Dave Nicholson, Mark Williamson, Darren Jones (Dept. of Conservation)

**It was moved: *That those apologies are accepted.***

***Cameron Shanks/Wayne Pepper CARRIED.***

**Previous Minutes**

**It was resolved: *That the minutes of the meeting held on the 4th April 2014 are confirmed as true and correct.***

***Chris Lynch/Maurice Blyde CARRIED.***

**Matters Arising**

**Northland Fish & Game Habitat Trust**

The Chairman of the Northland Fish & Game Habitat Trust, Peter Geddes, wrote a letter to the OAG challenging their decision and to seek a review on the status of the trust. The Manager received a preliminary response from Andrea Neame of the OAG and their initial understanding of the Trust is that it is closely aligned to the Fish & Game Council.

The Council agreed that no further action can be taken until a final determination and letter is received from the OAG.

**Manager’s Activity Report**

**Mallard Research**

The Manager circulated the opening weekend results to all Councillors. Generally the figures showed that the hunting hours and the amount of ducks shot were above the previous year’s opening weekend.

The Manager also advised the Council that Councillor Shanks had agreed to join the Operation Duck Pond project which is being developed by Nathan Burkepile.

**Fish Releases**

The Manager informed the Council of the fish liberations which took place on the 29th May 2014. The Manager presented a video of trout being released into the Whau Valley Dam which was taken by Karl Pereira, ranger for Fish & Game Northland.

**Resource Management Act**

The Northland Regional Council is forming a community group as part of its Wairoa Northland Water programme. The regional council has approached Northland Fish & Game to be a part of this catchment group for the Pouto Peninsula in the Kaipara region. The Manager has his concerns on the staff resources and the amount of staff time consumed at these meetings.

**Greenheart Property**

All contractual work has been postponed at the Greenheart Property till next summer because of weather and ground conditions being too wet. The Manager has advised the forestry company and the grazier of this decision. The Manager has also advised the grazier that the forestry company will commence planting of trees and that he should check all boundary fences.

**Angler Access**

The Manager informed Council that the track at the Wilsons Dam has been cleared and a gate has been erected to improve angler access.

**2014 Kai Iwi Lakes Fishing Competition**

The tickets for the 2014 fishing competition is on sale and the Manager asked any Councillors for their assistance on the Sunday of the competition as Fay is unable to attend this year. A couple of the councillors have agreed to help at the competition.

**Compliance**

A recent compliance report has been received and is being sent out to all Councillors and rangers. The Manager informed Council of the four wildlife offences and one firearm offence which occurred over the opening weekend of the 2014 game bird season. There were two unlicensed hunters which the Prosecutions Committee have offered them reparations. Letters have been sent out to these offenders and the Manager has not received a response.

The other two offences were dealt with by the Manager and the firearms were returned to the hunters. The offence relating to a firearm was not a Fish & Game offence but a Police matter. The Manager surrendered the firearm to the Police and the Police are currently dealing with this matter.

The Fish & Game office also received several incidents where birds were shot and dumped in the Kaihu, Ruakaka and Maramaku areas.

**Licensing**

Fay reported on the major crash the online website experienced on the weekend before the opening weekend which resulted in a lot of duplicated licences. Fay has contacted the licence holders and the agents and has resolved most of the duplicated licences. Both Fish and Game bird licence sales are very close to the previous year.

**Northland Sports Fish & Game Management Plan**

The Manager has had no time to develop and update the Sports Fish & Game Management Plan due to other work commitments. Robert Sowman, NZFGC, has offered to assist Northland region with its Sports Management Plan. He wants to standardise a statutory document to cover all Fish & Game regions and then each region to edit and highlight the different areas to cover their particular region.

**It was moved: *That the Manager’s Activity Report is received.***

***Phil Durham/Cameron Shanks CARRIED.***

**Councillor Governance Assessment**

The Council Performance Review results were circulated to the Council. The Chairman proposed for all councillors to review this report and that the Council should address this matter at the next Council meeting in August.

**NZFG Council Update**

Councillor Lynch attended a NZFGC meeting in Wellington on the 24th May 2014. Councillor Lynch highlighted the following points from the unconfirmed minutes:

* The CEO of NZFGC was unwell and off work. The Council appointed a new Chairman for the NZFG Council. Lindsay Lyons of Eastern region was declared the new chairman for the NZFG Council.
* The Director General, Lou Sanson, of the Department of Conservation spoke to the Council and wants to work closer with NZ Fish & Game.
* The letter from the Northland Fish & Game Council with queries on the reduction of the national reserves was received but not addressed at this meeting. Councillor Lynch commented on this letter being sent to other regions and not just to the Chairman of the NZFGC as proposed at the previous Northland Council meeting.
* Environmental Co-ordination Role. NZFGC endorsed the contestable funding for Wellington F&G to engage a Resource Management position. This new position will be established at Wellington to deal with any RMA policies.
* Youth Programme Funding. Councillor Lynch and the Manager made further comments on this matter.
* Staff Scholarship. The recommendations made by the Managers were accepted by the NZFGC. It was agreed to support Nathan Burkepile’s application to bring an international wetland expert to NZ to speak and hold workshops on creating and maintaining wetlands.

The Councillors enquired on whether the lead shot in sub-gauges was discussed. Councillor Lynch informed them that several items on the agenda were not addressed due to there being no time left within the meeting. At the next NZFGC meeting, it was agreed to have a three day meeting to catch up on all items.

**2014-2015 Licence Fee Recommendations**

The Council briefly discussed the proposed increases for the 2014/2015 financial year.

**It was moved:** ***That the Northland Fish & Game Council support the NZFGC recommendation for the 2014/2015 adult whole season sports fish licence of $123 and an adult whole season game licence fee of $91(inclusive of a $2 fee for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp) inclusive of GST.***

***Kris Batelaan/Mike Newson CARRIED.***

**Anglers Notice 2014/2015**

The Manager provided the Council with a recommendation that no changes be made to the region’s angler notice.

**It was moved: *That the 2014-2015 Anglers Notice remain unchanged from the 2013-2014 Angler Notice.***

***Kris Batelaan/Cameron Shanks CARRIED.***

**New Licence Categories**

An email from Robert Sowman was circulated for the Council’s information. The proposed

licence categories may not proceed because current wording in the legislation, Conservation and Wildlife Acts and the Freshwater Fisheries and Wildlife Regulations will need to be amended.

**Underwood Wetland Property**

The Manager has visited this property near Dargaville on two occasions and his first impression was that the property has high conservation values and is very unique. The Manager has discussed this property with Chris Jenkins, Department of Conservation, and enquired whether the Department would be interested in purchasing some of this habitat block through the Nature Heritage Fund. Nan Pullman, QE11 Field Officer, was contracted by DOC to visit the property with the Manager to inspect the forestry, wetlands and plant life within the property.

The Manager delivered a power point presentation, using google earth, maps and photos highlighting the property. The Manager believed that the habitat was unique and recommended that the Council visit the property as a group.

**It was moved:** ***The Council gives the Manager authority to carry on discussions with DOC and the land owner, Mr Underwood, on purchase of part or all of this property.***

***Noel Birchall/Cameron Shanks CARRIED.***

**Executive Limitations Report**

**It was moved: *That the Executive Limitations Report be received.***

***Cameron Shanks/Mike Newson CARRIED.***

**Managers Financial Report**

**It was moved: *That the amended Financial Report be received.***

***Phil Durham /Wayne Pepper CARRIED.***

**Other Business**

The Council congratulated Richard Robbins on being elected to the Northland Conservation Board for another term and conveyed their appreciation in his attendance to the Fish & Game Council meetings. The Manager had also received an invite from the Northland Conservation Board to provide a presentation on the role and responsibilities of Fish & Game Councils.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.45pm.

***Noel Birchall***

***Appointed Chairman***