

Unconfirmed Minutes of the Fish and Game NZ, Southland Region council meeting held at the Southland Fish and Game Offices, 17 Eye Street, Invercargill on 12th December 2024, commencing at 6.00pm.

Present:

Lindsay Withington (Chair)	Bruce Diprose
Lyndon Norman	Cyril Gilroy
Craig Horrell	David MacGregor

In attendance: Zane Moss (Manager), Jacob Smyth, Bill Jarvie, Dwight Grieve, Cohen Stewart and Ben Febery

1 Welcome:

The Chairman opened the meeting at 6.05pm and welcomed those in attendance.

2 Apologies:

Mike Turner, Mike Hartstonge, Dave Harris

Resolved Withington/Norman apologies be accepted. Carried.

3 Declarations of Interest:

The individual member declaration of conflicts of interest with any item on the agenda had been circulated to members before the start of the meeting.
Any conflicts were noted by the Chairman.

4 Confirmation of Minutes.

The minutes of the public meeting held 13th of November 2024 were considered.

Resolved Norman/Withington That the minutes of the public meeting held 13th November 2024 were taken as read and were a true and correct record. Carried.

5 Notices of Motion

Health & Safety Report.

The Council Health & Safety report for the period was attached to the agenda for consideration. All known hazards were listed in the Southland Health & Safety Plan.

Resolved Norman/MacGregor: That the Health and Safety Report be received and accepted. Carried.

A discussion arose out of the Health and Safety report regarding PPE associated with an upcoming Canada goose cull and the growing risks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The manager provided some background to the likely risks associated with the seemingly inevitable presence of the virus in New Zealand in the future. He also drew the council's attention to a workshop next Thursday, with an expert virologist from Otago

University who would provide some very interesting background and context regarding the virus.

Councillor MacGregor questioned whether or not we should consider having a more conservative bag limit for mallards, given the likely mortality of Mallard ducks if and when the virus finds its way to New Zealand? The manager identified that it is likely there will be a host of things that will be revisited if and when that occurs, and consideration could be given at that time to potentially change to bag limits to reduce harvest if viral-induced mortality was considered likely to be significant.

Gamebird Regulations for 2025 Season

Cohen summarized the hunter satisfaction survey conducted by Matt Garrick last season, highlighting that as bag limits go up, so too do hunter expectations. If those increased expectations aren't achieved then hunters are less satisfied. For example, if someone shoots six mallards in a North Island region that has a comparatively low bag limit, they are likely to be quite satisfied. However, if someone shoots six in the Central South Island region, where the bag limit is 50, they are likely to be extremely dissatisfied, because they are so far below the limit.

Australasian shoveler

Councillor Norman expressed concern that Southland and Otago were reducing the opportunity for their hunters to harvest shoveler when some North Island regions hadn't also changed their bag limits. He highlighted that if we did consider it was a truly national population, there was a good argument to be made to have a universal national bag limit. It was concluded that it would be appropriate for Southland's NZC appointee to raise this with the New Zealand Council when he attends the meeting this weekend, with the hope that if some regions had not yet confirmed their bags for shoveller that this may influence their deliberations. It was also concluded that Southland should write to the New Zealand Council, copying other regions, requesting a universal national bag limit for shoveler for the 2026 season.

Mallards

Resolved Norman/Horrell That the council accept the staff recommendation with respect to season length and bag limits for Mallard Ducks for the 2025 season. Carried

Paradise shelduck

Resolved Horrell/MacGregor That the council accept the staff recommendation with respect to season length and bag limits for Paradise shelduck for the 2025 season. Carried

Australasian Shoveler

Resolved MacGregor/Horrell That the council accept the staff recommendation with respect to season length and bag limits for Australasian shoveler for the 2025 season. Carried

Black Swan

Resolved Norman/MacGregor That the council accept the staff recommendation with respect to season length and bag limits for Black Swan for the 2025 season. Carried

Pukeko

Resolved Norman/Horrell That the council accept the staff recommendation with respect to season length and bag limits for Pukeko for the 2025 season. Carried

Upland Game

Resolved MacGregor/Norman That the council accept the staff recommendation with respect to season length and bag limits for Upland Game for the 2025 season. Carried

Environment Court Section 70

Jacob explained the background to Environment Southland seeking a stay in proceedings with respect to Rule 24 and the application of section 70 of the RMA. After discussion around whether Southland should support, oppose or remain neutral with respect to Environment Southland seeking a stay in proceedings, council resolved to abide by the Court's decision with respect to their application.

Resolved Norman/MacGregor That the council abide by the Court's decision with respect to ES seeking a stay in the Environment Court proceedings. Carried

Staff Report

Gravel Extraction

Jacob gave some additional background regarding the process associated with gravel extraction consents. ES has commissioned Professor Ian Fuller from Massey University, who highlighted the need for an holistic approach to gravel management, with much better monitoring. He recommends looking at expanding river corridors and giving rivers more room.

The Council has also established the Southland Technical Advisory Group, which is really well recognized riverine engineers, both domestically and internationally, that provides recommendations around some of the more challenging or contentious site specific issues.

Monowai Jetty

The manager gave an update on progress towards the establishment of the Monowai Jetty, highlighting Ben Febery's great work obtaining \$35,000 of funding from Lotteries towards the project. The hope is that lake levels will drop sufficiently to enable construction in late February.

Wildlife Park

The manager gave some background to the Council regarding the Department of Conservation's review of their ongoing involvement in the captive birds at the Wildlife Park. He surmised the fact that it was being reviewed suggested there was likely to be change in the future. He had had preliminary discussions with Great South over potential funding for interim and ongoing developments.

The manager drew the council's attention to the draft feedback to the minister's questions, with respect to potential changes to the organisation. He identified that much of the material had been drawn from previous feedback that the Southland Region had provided to other forums, such as the Resource Allocation work, and the Regional Structure work.

The council approved the material with the proviso being Mike Hartstone, who couldn't make the meeting, was also happy with the material.

Resolved Norman/Horrell. That the council accepts the draft submission to the Minister's letter and send it subject to councillor Hartstonge's support. Carried

Correspondence

The Chair led discussions on the correspondence, with no matters raised.

Administration Reports

Council discussed licence sales to date, noting we were tracking at a similar rate to the previous spring.

The Chair approved the Journal.

Resolved Norman/Horrell. That the council accept the Administration report. Carried

NZC update.

The chairman noted that he was yet to attend the NZC meeting, which was the following day.

Federated Farmers smear campaign.

The chairman identified that the Minister was attending the New Zealand Council meeting the following weekend. A question arose as to whether or not the Minister would likely discuss councillor Linklater's resignation with Lindsay at that meeting. It was noted that the resignation letter and apology that Mr Linklater provided to our council was significantly different to his subsequent letter to the Minister demanding the removal of the council.

The chair updated the meeting on the Federated Farmer's reply to his email questioning their ongoing position. They are saying they're unchanged and that;

- There is still far too much anti farming rhetoric coming from Fish & Game.
- There are still signs being put back up where farmers have taken them down
- He would not give any examples of these things happening.

The chairman went on to clarify that *"Mr Herrick stated that they're not backing down until there is a change in leadership within our staffing. Basically, unless Zane and potentially Jacob go, then they're not changing their position. As a council we know that neither have done anything wrong and in fact we admire the work that they do, and so we're now back at a crossroads"*.

Jacob noted that it's very difficult to respond to something if they're not coming up with substance, and this was a continuation of baseless claims. The manager noted that given

half the council were farmers, it would be pretty untenable for staff to maintain a so-called anti-farming rhetoric. Councillor Norman suggested that as a farmer he'd be likely to come under some pretty direct criticism if this was the case too. Councillor MacGregor stated that he felt we should be setting the record straight and calling them out on this. He'd checked many of the things claimed in the meeting, and they're not even close to being true. Councillor Horrell noted that in his view someone had just "done a drive-by" and removed the easy signs and that the access signs through the property he worked on had been removed and had certainly not been by him. He expressed concern that that reflected badly on him, as it implied he supported the feds.

After discussion, the council concluded that there was little point continuing to try and deal with Federated Farmers at a local level. Their comments in the media after the joint meeting were entirely inaccurate. They had failed to produce the information that they had offered to and their conduct showed that they could not be trusted to operate with any integrity.

Items for next meeting

Given the relatively tight time frame to now start the annual general meeting, the council concluded that they would be best to e-mail the chair if they had any items they wished to add to the next meeting's agenda.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

Next meeting to be held 5th February 2025

Chairman _____ Date _____