

WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER 2020 AT 3.05PM HELD AT CLUB WAIRARAPA, 20 ESSEX STREET, MASTERTON.

1. **Present:**

Chairman Strato Cotsilinis, Councillors Jim Cook, Malcolm Francis, Don Scott, John Hancock, Chris O'Meara, Colin Shore, Paul Shortis, Andrew McGregor, Aaron Passey.

In Attendance:

Fish and Game Staff: Phil Teal (Regional Manager), Dr Matt Kavermann, Hamish Carnachan, Nathan Field

Licence Holders: John Pansters, Robert Sowman

2. **Apologies:**

Councillors Andy Tannock, Richard McIntyre, Aaron Passey (for lateness)

It was moved

that apologies be accepted

Chris O'Meara/Colin Shore

Carried

Welcome and Confirmation of Agenda

Chairman Cotsilinis welcomed the Council and public.

3. **Conflict of Interest**

There were no additional conflicts of interest that were identified specific to the agenda.

Mr Teal confirmed that the Conflict of Interest management plan would be updated if new conflicts of interest were identified or Council chose to deal with a managing a conflict in a different way.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting of 11 August 2020:**

After brief discussion it was moved that

the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 11 August 2020 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Malcolm Francis/Don Scott

Carried

5. **Matters Arising:**

Mr Teal confirmed that Taranaki Fish and Game Council would update Wellington Council on confirmed current access arrangements to Lake Namunamu.

Dr Kavermann updated Council on the special licence applied for by GWRC for taking fish for monitoring purposes and that currently gill netting was not a preferred option.

Mr Teal noted that there had been no formal feedback from the organisational Review Panel, but they had informally indicated their appreciation for the conduct of the meeting with Wellington Council and their views expressed.

Councillor Francis expressed appreciation for the conduct and considered views expressed by all and the professional quality of the presentation endorsed by Council.

6. **NZ Fish and Game Council Business**

Councillor Shortis confirmed progress of two projects that were currently being progressed by NZ Council:

1. **Reserves Policy:** Councillor Shortis confirmed that a discussion document would form part of the second round of consultation with regional Fish and Game councils before a final policy draft is prepared for NZ Council. Mr Teal confirmed that this would be on the agenda and considered at the Wellington Council meeting on 8 December 2020.
2. **Resource Allocation Project:** Councillor Shortis confirmed that this process had commenced with the appointment of an independent project manager with a reference group established including a number of internal governors (including Chairman Cotsilinis) and operational staff. The Terms of Reference were developed independently to consider the changes in resourcing requirements for each region. This work would be carried out in parallel with the work already underway with the Organisational Review Panel and this was an important piece of work to be considered in their deliberations.

It was confirmed that the resource allocation process would also include assessing the resourcing of NZ Council.

Councillor Shortis noted that there was an in-committee discussions on how NZ Council were responding to the audit findings regarding Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council. Representatives from Hawke's Bay Council

were present to provide advice to NZ Council. Any actions would be made public in due course.

Councillor Shortis noted that discussion on NZ Council's position on continued existence of Game Preserves under Schedule 3 of the Wildlife Act 1953 (and longer). He noted that the perceptions of commercialisation was an ethical debate and was misrepresented in the media. The vote was 5 for and 5 against an option that would see a sunset clause invoked in two years – and the Chairman used his casting vote to retain status quo – for Game Preserves to be managed under Schedule 3 of the Wildlife Act (without a specified end date until an Order was made by Order in Council).

Councillor Shortis outlined the discussions on NZ Council's deliberations on a position to trout farming – as it had previously consistently opposed trout farming based on the assertions of disease proliferations, potential poaching, and establishment of increased trading through a black market. In the interim there had been commercial interests including iwi to develop trout farming that had been developing broad funding proposals and undertaking political lobbying. Council resolved to develop research proposals to confirm the positive and negative impacts on wild trout fisheries and the develop an informed objective position (rather than an emotionally based discussion). Wellington Council then briefly discussed the issues of trout farming confirming that several proposals had shown they are not particularly economic, even compared to salmon fisheries which is seen as only marginally profitable. It was considered likely that trout farming would need to be subsidised by centrally funding (taxpayer based) to establish the industry.

Councillor Francis considered that a budget of \$20,000 would be the minimum required to get a review of current research and understanding. He noted that there was a lot of current information on trout farming internationally including subsidies for operation. Discussion ensued on potentially proponents advocating for closed systems and how the canal fisheries in the South Island could operate. Councillor Scott did note that caution should be given to anti-trout farming advocacy that focusses solely on negative effects as this has the potential to challenge the credibility of the position. It was considered that fundamentally that regardless of the ethical debate, if it doesn't stack up economically with private ventures (without taxpayer funding) then they are unlikely to proceed. The Ministry for Primary Industries had provided a view that it was appropriate to take an overview of the current scientific understanding was a good view.

Councillor Passey arrived at the meeting at 3.30pm.

Councillor Scott didn't consider that trout farming should be subsidised. He cited examples in other countries where capital had been used to establish storage dams but there was a sideline in recreational fishing but not as an economic venture. He did however consider that there were opportunities in New Zealand for put and take fisheries for less able anglers.

Chairman Cotsilinis noted that previously there had been submissions from MPI to positively allow trout farming, but this had been opposed by DOC, Fish and Game and EDS – and that this had been put forward to the Minister as an issue. He noted that there had been unforeseen issues in management of fisheries in other countries such as Norway where whirling disease from farmed ventures was reportedly the cause of a wipeout of several natural fisheries.

Councillor Shortis noted that NZ Council rescinded a motion relating to the original purpose of the Non-resident Levy – being inferred by a previous Minister of Conservation (Kate Wilkinson) as requiring funds to be exclusively to be spent on back-country fisheries. The current Minister did not hold the same view on exclusive use of this revenue stream for back-country fisheries only. The income (premium above the price for a whole season adult fishing licence) would now be considered general income as previously it was inferred that it be added to a dedicated reserve for each region – and all income is meant to be able to be levied. Funds currently classified as Non-resident Dedicated Reserves should be transferred by accounting transaction to General Reserves (i.e. no ring fencing of funds).

Councillor Francis commended the efforts of Councillor Shortis for his efforts as NZ Council Chairman to change the culture of transparency within the organisation. It was noted by most fishing club members canvased in the region that they considered that there had been a shift in attitude of governors on NZ Council in providing transparent information and actively seeking feedback.

It was then moved that

The report from Councillor Shortis on business relating to the NZ Fish and Game Council meeting from 21 – 23 August 2020 be received.

Malcolm Francis/don Scott

Carried

7. **Public Forum**

There were no items for discussion at the public forum.

8. **Health and Safety Reporting**

A brief discussion was held on various approaches to COVID-19 level restrictions and the continued use of the QR code tracing App.

It was moved that

Council receive the Health and Safety Report for August and September 2020

Colin Shore/Jim Cook

Carried

9. **Meeting Schedule Timetable 2021**

After brief discussion it was confirmed that the AGM and meeting for December 2021 would be held in Masterton (rather than Upper Hutt) to remain consistent with rotating the AGM location each year.

It was also confirmed that a teleconference (or Zoom meeting) would be conducted in late January 2021 to confirm the details for the paradise shelduck and black swan season conditions flowing trend count flights.

It was then moved that

The following amendments to the meeting timetable be noted

Aaron Passey / Jim Cook

Carried

10. **Ministerial Fish and Game Governance Review**

A brief discussion ensued on the main points made by Council to the Review Panel. The final report was anticipated by 31 December 2020 but given that the resource allocation project still operating, there would be no surprises if the reports were not forwarded to the Minister until the end of February 2021. Mr Teal gave a brief overview of subsequent meetings held around the country with other regional Fish and Game councils and suspected similar messaging from most councils. Discussion postulated about how a new Minister would deal with the review moving forward – with the potential for the Review Report to be presented to the Minister but is not necessarily publicly released.

Councillor O'Meara sought clarification on one technical aspect regarding the requirement to tick a box in order to be eligible to vote in a fish and game regional election. He noted that Section 26Y (2) of Conservation Act 1987 required any licence holder entitled to vote must register their choice to participate in the election (which is recorded on an electoral roll). The concept of potentially allowing anyone entitled to vote to participate, is not necessarily consistent with requiring people to indicate their desire to

participate by registering on the electoral role. This may need further clarification should those principles be changed – which NZ Council could seek a change through an Order in Council to the election regulations.

11. Non-Resident Levy

Council received a letter dated 16 September 2020 Re: Non-Resident Levy from NZ Council Chief Executive which outlined the reasons for changing the treatment of Non-Resident Licence income:

- The existing Non-Resident funds currently held as dedicated reserves would be treated as General Reserves (for financial year end 2019/2020).
- All licence income will be budgeted as income for Fish and Game management and operations (Non-Resident Licence ~ 1.3 x Adult Whole Season Fishing Licence).
- Any projects for backcountry management would be dealt with through existing contestable fund processes.

It was also noted that Otago Fish and Game Council had expressed their concern in an email dated 29 September 2020 from Otago Fish and Game Council Chief Executive – that they disagreed with the amalgamation of the Non-Resident Dedicated Reserve with the General Reserve – and that this material change in dealing with reserve allocation should have been consulted more widely with regions prior to the decision.

12. Policy Review

Customs Import Prohibition (Trout) Order: Council referred to an email from NZ Council Policy Advisor Jack Kós regarding a request from DOC for Fish and Game’s position on continuation of the Customs Import Prohibition (Trout) Order. Council expressed concern that allowing for importation of trout flesh risks opening up an uncontrolled market. Chairman Cotsilinis noted that this could result in allowing imports but authorities don’t necessarily know their origin in terms of potential diseases. Council considered the email from Otago Fish and Game Council Chief Executive and concurred with their views - that a ban of imported trout flesh should continue, and that relaxation of this aspect may be a precursor to remove barriers to trout farming. Further discussion noted that this might be viewed differently by decision makers if trout farming in New Zealand establishes a viable market. It was confirmed that the Biosecurity agents should be in a position to control diseases.

It was then moved that

Wellington Fish and Game Council reaffirm the status quo of continuing a Customs Import Prohibition (Trout) Order

Malcolm Francis/Colin Shore

Carried

Reserves Policy: Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the Discussion Document on a review of the Reserves Policy – which would be discussed at the Wellington Council meeting of 8 December 2020.

Chairman Cotsilinis noted that some regions had reserves accumulated from surpluses set aside for particular purposes but these were not required to be used. These could be set aside in accumulated funds. Councillor Shortis noted that regions can control finances by having distinct allocations of reserves – but by having clear financial controls, regions won't need to. Chairman Cotsilinis outlined the example that North Canterbury Fish and Game region had essentially transferred cash funds (reserves) into a large bricks and mortar asset (Office facilities) – and subsequently were struggling with the cash flow requirements using the remaining cash reserves.

13. Draft Communications Strategy

NZ Council staff were requested to review their version of the draft Communications Strategy. There was concern on how to deal with the alternative version forwarded by Wellington Council and whether this would be received negatively by NZ Council staff.

Councillor Scott questioned why NZ Council staff were not proactively getting involved with some initiatives such as the recently successful family fishing day at Hokowhitu Lagoon, Palmerston North – the regional publicity was very good, but even the branding initiative of *Take Me Fishing* seems very slow in introduction.

Dr Kavermann noted the recent publicity for highlighting opportunities for junior fishing – and how the internal Wellington staff delivered it in a collaborative manner – Mr Teal outlining the concept, Mr Carnachan producing a press release uptaken by TV3's *The AM Show*, and Mr Field providing a concise and focused interview.

Councillor Francis noted that there needed to be a different approach by NZ Council staff as the current challenge was to sell licences - and longer term to establish better links with domestic tourism operators.

Chairman Cotsilinis noted that there were two types of communication requirements – to promote and educate the pursuits, and public awareness on a political level. Discussion ensued on the NZ Council staff strategy that required all regional communications to get an approval from NZ Council staff and how this was indicative of how NZ Council wanted to control all messaging – including selling licences which was not their core function - rather than co-ordinating this function. It was considered that the financial

review on what NZ Council are doing – and appropriately changing the NZ Council derived communications should be overarching not controlling.

14. Draft Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plan

Discussion ensued on the draft Sports Fish and Game Management Plan and consideration of changing the dates to reflect the period 2021 to 2031. Chairman Cottilinis considered that we should initiate the consultation process with only a few more minor formatting changes required (eg. §2.2.1 (h)).

It was then moved that

public consultation of the Draft Sports Fish and Game Bird Management plan may proceed

Aaron Passey/Jim Cook

Carried

Councillor Francis noted that it might be appropriate to include some focus on the effects of climate change on habitat – particularly the west coast of the lower North Island. This included broadening the thinking on effects on habitat such as flow intensities and gravel transport down the rivers. Mr Teal concurred that some comprehensive work had been undertaken by other agencies and this information considered specifically for impacts on resources of interest to Fish and Game.

15. Project Reports for 2019/2020

Council commended the teamwork and time to undertake the field work and compile an excellent record of this work. Each project report in the compendium was received unless it was considered and received at a previous Council meeting.

1111 Sports Fish Population Monitoring: Brief discussion ensued over the key points in the report. Dr Kavermann confirmed that more could be done to promote the perch fisheries but currently are not monitored to meaningful intensity.

It was moved that

Project Report 1111 Sports Fish Population Monitoring for 2019/2020 Year be received

Jim Cook/Aaron Passey

Carried

1111A Trout Spawning Surveys Monitoring: Dr Kavermann noted that staff had undertaken electric fishing in summer and located additional areas of juvenile habitat (and by inference spawning habitat upstream) that

previously hadn't been confirmed as a spawning site. He noted that Fish and Game needed to keep an up-to-date register of spawning sites for RMA advocacy purposes. He also noted that a lot of historical data had been logged in the NIWA Freshwater Fish Database. Councillor Scott noted the ability to monitor tributaries of the Manawatu River and the eDNA testing that was carried out in collaboration with Massey University researchers. It was moved that

Project Report 1111A Trout Spawning Survey Monitoring for 2019/2020 Year be received

Malcolm Francis/Aaron Passey

Carried

1112 Rangitikei River Trout Fishery Management: considered and received at previous Council meeting.

1113 Controlled Rivers – Trout Fishery Management Monitoring: considered and received at previous Council meeting.

1114 Game Bird Population Assessment Monitoring:

Mallard Duck: Dr Kavermann provided an overview of the results of the Mallard Duck Transect Count Project – noting that the number of birds were down but this was conducted at least three weeks later than previous studies due to COVID-19 restrictions. He confirmed that the number of birds observed is still within the 'moderate' range and that the population appeared to be stable.

Paradise shelduck: Dr Kavermann provided an overview of paradise shelduck monitoring – noting that there was a slight decrease overall, but the average (mean) number of birds at each site was stable. He noted that this was the fourth year of observed decline – which was corroborated by field observations that the birds were still numerous but in smaller groups

Black swan: the overall numbers for the central New Zealand population is higher but the contribution to this conclusion was mainly from the Nelson/Marlborough counts. Higher aggregations than previous years were reported in Porirua and Lake Wairarapa surrounds – but this may be temporary in duration with birds mobile. Dr Kavermann confirmed that any alterations to the regulations were determined after the late January/early February counts.

Pukeko: Dr Kavermann noted that there were high numbers of aggregations which are manifesting in complaints from landholders.

It was moved that

Project Report 1114 Game Bird Population Assessment Monitoring for 2019/2020 Year be received

Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara

Carried

1114A Mallard Banding Report:

Mr Field provided a brief overview of the banding effort for the year with around 1700 birds banded and locations of birds recovered – with the possibility of undertaking some predator control activity at one particular site.

Mr Teal confirmed that staff had ‘cleaned up’ all the data to enable future analysis for at least the first five or six years of the banding programme.

It was moved that

Project Report 1114A Mallard Banding Report for 2019/2020 Year be received

Chris O’Meara/Jim Cook

Carried

1121 National Hunter Game Bird Harvest Survey:

Dr Kavermann noted that the start of the open game bird season was delayed by three weeks but extended into July by two weeks – although the length of the season was truncated by only one week. It was noted that there were fewer licences sold (~9% fewer) which will be reflected in the total harvest estimates. There were numerous comments from hunters that the birds should be allowed to nest undisturbed in July, but that was their individual choice to choose that hunting ethic. There was an expectation that fewer birds would be harvested but estimates indicate that slightly more mallard ducks were harvested than the previous year (up ~10%). Dr Kavermann confirmed that there would not be a need for any additional summer seasons to be considered. Dr Kavermann noted that the cumulative harvest of shoveler, paradise shelduck, and pukeko were very similar to previous years (around 25% of mallard harvest). He further confirmed that harvest numbers of black swan were high, which was corroborated by field observations for aggregation size.

Dr Kavermann briefly summarised any urgent considerations of regulations:

- No summer season for mallard or paradise shelduck required.
- Mallards remained in the ‘moderate/normal’ range and would only alter regulations if a severe drought occurred over summer.
- The mid/late January counts would determine if changes to regulations was warranted for paradise shelduck, and/or black swan.

It was moved that

Project Report 1121 National Hunter Game Bird Harvest Survey Report for 2019/2020 Year be received

Aaron Passey/Chris O’Meara

Carried

1123 Regional Angling Survey:

After brief discussion it was moved

***Project Report 1123 Regional Angling Survey Report for 2019/2020 Year
be received***

Malcolm Francis/Jim Cook

Carried

1124 Regional Hunter Survey:

After brief discussion on a compliance contact number outside office hours it was moved

***Project Report 1124 Regional Hunter Survey Report for 2019/2020 Year
be received***

Chris O'Meara/Colin Shore

Carried

1181 Game Bird Dispersal:

After brief discussion it was moved

***Project Report 1181 Game Bird Dispersal Report for 2019/2020 Year be
received***

Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis

Carried

1211 RMA Advocacy Summary/1211A Senior Environmental Planner:

Mr Teal gave an overview of the general RMA advocacy, regional planning processes, and assistance given to other regions with the shared resource. He also brought attention to the development of relationships with the Regional Councils to ensure Fish and Game were attributed "affected party status" as appropriate.

After brief discussion it was moved

***Project Report 1211 RMA Advocacy Summary Report for 2019/2020
Year and 1211A Senior Environmental Planner Report be received***

Aaron Passey/Chris O'Meara

Carried

1313 Hunter Access Permits and Ballots:

After brief discussion it was moved

***Project Report 1313 Hunter Access Permits and Ballots Report for
2019/2020 Year be received***

Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis

Carried

Communications Summary Report (1331,1341,1441,1442):

Mr Carnachan provided an overview of the initiatives undertaken by Wellington Fish and Game Council – but expressed his general frustration of lack of co-ordination by NZ Council staff. Mr Carnachan noted that he was

engaged by regional Fish and Game staff more frequently to provide timely advice, and Wellington Fish and Game were essentially filling the vacuum in communications. The importance of regionalising stakeholder relationships and considering natural resources being communicated in regional context. Councillors expressed their frustration that NZ Council staff were not adequately engaging nationwide media for positive stories on selling licences, nor providing resources when requested for events when engaging with potential licence holders.

Discussion continued on the importance of retaining licence sales in the next two years and the inadequacy of emphasis put on the marketing function by NZ Council. There did not appear to be a clear, objective, and focused active programme to prioritise engagement to sell licences. It was agreed that Wellington Council should write to NZ Council to seek a change in focus and increased action in getting their communications team to target potential, previous, and current licence holders from an R3 perspective – matching the needs of each potential cohort. It was confirmed that Wellington Council should request NZ Council reallocate resources to marketing function should any reforecasting of budgets and allocations occur at the November NZ Council meeting. This would have a priority to get people out fishing and drive up participation – particularly from the domestic tourism market. It was considered that the organisation needed to capitalise the domestic tourism participation opportunity and the regional fish and game councils are the sales centres.

It was then moved that

a letter be sent to NZ Council to allocate more resources to the regional sales function to leverage increased sales to ensure the organisation can survive any projected long-term economic downturn:

- ***give urgent consideration to reviewing and reallocating resources and staff time to the marketing function to maintain and increase licence sales.***
- ***proactive in ensuring we have the right material available to our current anglers to meet their needs and expectations.***
- ***there needs to be a focused and sustained effort in the coming months to maintain the momentum of good early season licence sales.***

Malcolm Francis/Aaron Passey

Carried

After brief further discussion it was moved

Project Report Communications Summary Report for 2019/2020 Year be received

Aaron Passey/Malcolm Francis

Carried

1351 Lake Omanu Junior Hunters Programme:

Dr Kavermann provided a brief overview of activities around the lake – oaks had been planted on the western side of the lake, Councillor Cook had successfully organised a pukeko hunt, and a junior hunting programme was curtailed due to COVID-19 restrictions. After brief discussion it was moved

Project Report 1351 Lake Omanu Junior Hunters Programme Report for 2019/2020 Year be received

Malcolm Francis/Chris O'Meara

Carried

1354 Novice/Junior Anglers Programme:

Mr Carnachan provided an overview of the difficulties that COVID-19 had presented in progressing the Fish in Schools programme this year – where it was essentially deferred. Mr Teal also indicated that Dr David Pontin had provided a high-level overview of the Fish in Schools programme which focused on defining objectives and suggests an assessment of how to attain better school coverage.

After brief discussion it was moved

Project Report 1354 Novice/Junior Anglers Programme Report for 2019/2020 Year be received

Chris O'Meara/Don Scott

Carried

Compliance Summary Report (1521 Rangers/1531 Compliance):

Dr Kavermann confirmed that only stipendiary staff were actively ranging at level 2 under COVID-19 restrictions – which had affected the coverage that honorary rangers typically would be involved with – especially at the start of the game season. Dr Kavermann noted that there were over 90 days where 'normal' ranging by honorary rangers was not able to be completed under Council's health and safety plan. He brought to Council's attention that the three-yearly cycle of re-warranting honorary rangers was approaching and it is likely that Council will lose a few honorary rangers – due to a variety of personal circumstances.

After brief discussion it was moved

Project Report Compliance Summary Report for 2019/2020 Year be received

Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara

Carried

Licence Agent Report:

After brief discussion it was moved

Project Report Licence Agent Summary Report for 2019/2020 Year be received

Don Scott/Chris O'Meara

Carried

Project Report: Fish Licence and Game Licence Sales Summary Report

After brief discussion it was moved

***Project Report Fish Licence and Game Licence Sales Summary Report
Report for 2019/2020 Year be received***

Jim Cook/Chris O'Meara

Carried

Project Report: Health and Safety Summary Report

After brief discussion it was moved

***Project Report Health and Safety Summary Report for 2019/2020 Year
be received***

Malcolm Francis/Aaron Passey

Carried

Chairman Cotsilinis reiterated thanks on behalf of Council for the professional completion of the activities and reports provided as a record of activity for the 2019/2020 financial year. Acclamation.

16. Licence Management System Contract and Policy Development

Chairman Cotsilinis confirmed that the principal contract with Eyede Ltd had been signed by all regions and NZ Council. It was reiterated that all regions should have a copy of the final signed contract document between the 13 fish and game entities and Eyede Ltd.

It was agreed by NZ Council that policy be developed to cover how the contract and operational aspects would be managed in a transparent way – informing regional Fish and Game councils of contract management KPIs, and how all issues would be managed transparently between NZ Council and regions, including regional input.

NZ Council staff had focused on data ownership – but it was agreed that a MOU clearly defining how each entity could use the data would be developed. There was an existing (and current) protocol developed in March 2007 which provides some basis as to why and how the organisation had treated the data in the past. As an example – the E-Zines distributed by NZ Council had to establish and maintain a separate database for several reasons.

17. R3 Marketing Update

Mr Teal noted that NZ Council staff had been prodded to establish a marketing reference group. They had developed a number of initiatives and provided ideas for uptake. It was recognised that there needed to be a mix of objective and measurable tasks and those that were less easily to be able to

measure success. Councillor Scott reiterated that the prime objective currently is to promote fishing and sell licences.

After brief further discussion it was moved
the R3/Marketing Report be received

Malcolm Francis/John Hancock

18. Action Plan for Healthy Rivers – NPSFM and NES

Mr Teal provided a brief update on the implementation of the NPSFM 2020 and National Environmental Standards (NES 2020) which essentially came into effect on 3 September 2020. He noted that a Freshwater Implementation Group had been formed comprising mainly senior management of industry and regional councils as well as some environmental NGOs. He further noted that the Labour Party in the election campaign had pledged \$50 million to support integrated farm planning should they be re-elected to assist in implementation.

Mr Teal brought to Council's attention that respected planner Helen Marr had been commissioned to provide a synopsis and interpretation of what the NPSFM 2020 and NES 2020 actually mean in terms of implementation – and there are potentially a few negatives for Fish and Game in terms of wetland development/restoration and possible constraints maintenance/construction of maimais.

It was then moved that

The report on the update to the Action Plan for Healthy Waterways be received

Aaron Passey/Malcolm Francis

Carried

19. One Plan - Plan Change 2 Update

Mr Teal noted the hearing for Plan Change 2 was tomorrow 14 October 2020 and provided a copy of his submission on behalf of Council which would be presented at the Hearing. The Submission is primarily an advocacy submission rather than a 'expert technical' submission to allow for general statements on how trust was eroded between the previous Regional Council assemblage between 2013 and 2017 and the pervading culture that exists regarding an unwillingness to implement the plan as intended.

After brief discussion it was moved that

The report on the One Plan - Plan Change 2 update be received

Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis

Carried

20. Wairarapa Water Project

Mr Teal confirmed that Councillor Shortis, Peter Wilson and Mr Teal had met with Water Wairarapa representatives to update Fish and Game on the latest plans. The undertaking of appropriate environmental assessments was a key discussion point.

It is understood that the intention to file for all resource consents before the end of the calendar year is still valid.

After brief discussion it was moved that

The report on the Water Wairarapa project update be received

Chris O'Meara/Colin Shore

Carried

21. Western Region GWRC Resource Consent Applications

It was noted that nothing had progressed with iwi or other stakeholders in recent months.

22. Lake Wairarapa

It was noted that there had still been no progress in determining the legal mandate for the Kahungunu negotiators to progress the Treaty Settlement process.

Mr Teal confirmed that the Ramsar Wetland Status Application had been granted but Fish and Game were not invited to any ceremonial events.

Mr Teal confirmed that Wairarapa Moana via GWRC had been granted \$3.5 million in a 'spade ready' job creation scheme by Government with the final confirmed projects and their budgets would be determined for the December 2020 meeting of the Governance Group.

It was also confirmed the Game Bird Habitat Trust had increased its pledge from \$18,000 to up to \$100,000 to allow for on-ground works to manage water levels – including the water management weir in the Otakura Stream.

The meeting was adjourned at 6.00pm for dinner and reconvened at 6.40pm.

Mr Sowman and Mr Pansters left the meeting during this period.

Dr Kavermann outlined the work undertaken by Nathan Field who had been establishing an inventory of hunting sites with GPS co-ordinates and photos of status. Mr Field provided an overview of the stand allocation project (including individual stand assessments) and the intention to ballot a number of stands in November 2020.

It was agreed that an OIA would be developed to see if there were any draft plans by DOC or GWRC for the future management of the lake and surrounds that might affect existing or future hunting opportunities. It was also agreed that once the Statutory Reserve Board is formed that Fish and Game request a meeting with them to outline our intentions to continue management of maimais, hunting, and wetland management in the area.

It was confirmed that public meetings had been held with the existing standholders and discussion ensued on how to maintain substandard maimais (costs for maintaining ~\$700) but also potential liability for (re) building them. A clear message from the meetings was that hunting at these sites was a privilege, outlined the expectations via a 'standholders contract' and depowering the notion that there was no regulation of the sites or interest in managing compliance. Dr Kavermann noted it was timely to change the relaxed culture. A proposal was presented to include a charge of up to \$25 per standholder to ensure sites were managed to a minimum standard.

After brief discussion it was moved that

The proposal to actively manage and re-ballot non-compliant sites proceed and a fee of up to \$25 be considered for collection from each standholder.

Malcolm Francis/Colin Shore

Carried

The article by Jim Flack (DOC communications advisor) posted on the new Wairarapa Moana website was discussed with very little positive comment made regarding the effort and contribution made by Fish and Game (and its predecessors) over the decades.

After further brief discussion it was moved that

The update report on management issues at Lake Wairarapa be received

Jim Cook /Colin Shore

Carried

23. Research Update

Mr Teal and Dr Kavermann provided a brief update on the eDNA project and the Native Fish – Trout Interaction Project.

The eDNA project had focused on sites on the Kahuterawa Stream near Palmerston North and work had continued with Massey researchers.

The research had also looked at presence of spawning trout below Birchville dam – with an eDNA sample confirming presence of trout and evidence of trout spawning. This will be used in the prosecution case of GWRC (Compliance) v GWRC (Parks) for discharge of silt into the stream below Birchville dam.

Mr Teal confirmed that Ami Coughlan had been processing samples and establishing an inventory for oxygen isotope analysis for the native fish – trout interaction project.

As part of a larger MBIE grant application the Cawthron Institute had embarked on a project that would assess the financial and social values of trout fisheries in NZ.

Dr Adam Canning continues to provide advice and interest in the projects.

After brief discussion it was moved that

The update report on research projects be received

Chris O’Meara/Colin Shore

Carried

24. Junior/Novice Participation Update

Councillor Scott and Dr Kavermann provided an overview of the family fishing day held at Hokowhitu Lagoon - a promotion by the Manawatu Freshwater Anglers. An alternative format was pursued due to the uncertainty around COVID-19 restrictions with over 100 families and groups able to fish about a third of the lagoon for extended periods – in the end it was successful as a more authentic fishing experience and received positive feedback.

Chairman Cottilinis gave an overview of activities at the Capital Trout Centre since September with over 80 children attending the first event and numerous bookings for the event on 25 October 2020.

It was then moved

To receive the update report on junior/novice participation

Don Scott/Malcolm Francis

Carried

25. Access Issues

Mr Carnachan outlined a recent email from NZDF outlining the suspension of all access for recreational angling – partly due to their internal review but also due to the Waitangi Tribunal Hearings which are investigating reasons for compulsory land take under the Public Works Act from 1939 to 1973. NZDF are assessing all areas not critical for management of the Waiouru Base activities. This may eventuate in NZDF being required to forfeit land not used for the direct purpose of Defence requirements. Mr Carnachan noted that

this restricted the sites and number of viable helicopter operators able to access the upper reaches of the Rangitikei River.

Discussion ensued on how Fish and Game can get a clearer picture of what are underlying issues that have generated this response. Initially, Fish and Game should be considering how we engage with any of the key iwi groups and also re-engage with others where we have an existing relationship.

It was agreed that Fish and Game contact the author of the NZDF communication to get a broader appreciation of the issues involved.

Councillor McGregor left the meeting at 7.35pm

Following this Council will be in a better position to consider options for retaining access for anglers (up to 300 per year) to these sites. One option worth considering is seeking changes from DOC for a helicopter landing site on the edge of the Remote Experience Zone (REZ) – an option pursued and rebuffed in 2008.

Dr Kavermann brought to Council's attention that a walkway and cycle way around the Rangitikei District Council manage water reservoir at Marton had presented a determination by RDC for no further water activities on the lake including hunting. There has been no consultation on this aspect -so due process has not been followed. This is likely to affect six hunters who provide a means for dispersing birds that aggregate on the water – up to twice a year during the hunting season (opening weekend and Queen's Birthday weekend). It is planned to engage and set up a meeting but Council has already confirmed their decision at a governors level.

Dr Kavermann discussed the access at Tangimoana Forest where Fish and Game has an agreement with the forestry managers Earnslaw One to manage gamebird hunting access until 2051. Iwi (Rangitaane o Manawatu) who are the land owners via their treaty settlement (but not the managers of the forests) have sought to amend the agreement.

Mr Teal confirmed that staff were still to investigate opportunities for hunter access on three of the eastern Wairarapa forests – after which a management plan will be developed for sourcing birds and possible release to enhance existing populations.

It was then moved that

The update report on access issues be received

Aaron Passey/Colin Shore

Carried

26. Management Report – 1 August to 30 September 2020

Discussion ensued on an item relating to Kaikokopu Lake – a case that Horizons Regional Council acknowledge that the weir and exit point has been lowered – but do not have enough information on which to pursue a prosecution. There are discussions on what proactive stance Horizons will take to remedy the lowered lake (which largely now dries out most summers).

After further brief discussion it was moved that

Council receive the Management Report for period 1 August to 30 September 2020 be received.

Chris O'Meara/Don Scott

Carried

27. Licence Sales report

Mr Teal provided an overview of the fishing and game licence sales:

- 2019/20 fish licence sales LEQs were up slightly compare to last year (using income from Non-Resident Licence Holders as 1.3LEQ). There was an expectation that there would be virtual no non-resident licence sales this season – unless COVID-19 border restrictions are relaxed which seems unlikely.
- Licences issued for 2020 game season were approximately 9% down on budget given the game season started on 23 May 2020.

It was moved that

The licence sales reports for Fish Licence Sales 2019/2020 and Game 2020 be received

Malcolm Francis/Colin Shore

Carried

28. Expenditure Report/Financial Transactions

The summary of income and expenditure to 31 August 2020 indicated that the financial position was not too bad. It was confirmed that the wage subsidy had assisted greatly with cash flow and was legitimately applied for and used appropriately.

Mr Teal confirmed that he had undertaken an analysis of overhead expenditure and had taken a very aggressive approach to suspending spending on overhead items if possible.

Mr Teal noted that he had sought specific HR advice for COVID19 restrictions. It was then moved

Receive and Accept the Expenditure Reports to 31 August 2020 and Financial Transactions for July and August 2020.

Don Scott/Aaron Passey

Carried

Mr Teal noted that he would be actively assessing vehicle replacement as it had been deferred for over six months in the planned conservative replacement cycle.

29. Communications

Council acknowledged the articles posted on the NZ Federation of Freshwater Anglers by Piscator 44 which provided an often ill-informed opinion of NZ Council business.

Mr Teal brought to Council's attention the positive article about the contribution made by the late Don McCulloch - written by Wairarapa Times Age reporter (initiated by Wellington Fish and Game Council staff) and this was well received by his family.

It was then moved

To receive report on items of interest in communications and media

Chris O'Meara/Colin Shore

Carried

30. Recognition Medals

A brief discussion was held on recommending further nominations for recipients – noting that we still had a reasonable list to progress through.

31. Wellington Conservation Board Liaison

Mr Teal confirmed that Councillor Scott had previously indicated that he was keen to attend meetings in Palmerston North area, with topics of interest including Reservoir fisheries, and concerns relating to the Manawatu River trout fisheries. An open invitation was still available to Fish and Game Council.

32. General Business

Councillor Hancock noted that there had been an extended period of works on the banks of the Hutt River – with some areas eroding and depositing sediment – and it was assumed that this bank was being sacrificed as part of the floodway plan.

There being no items of general business the meeting was closed at 8.00pm.

Next Meeting to be held: ***Upper Hutt Cosmopolitan Club, 11 Logan Street, Upper Hutt on 8 December 2020 at 3pm.***

Chairman _____ Date _____