

## WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE WELLINGTON FISH & GAME COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY 8 AUGUST 2023 AT 3.00PM AT NGA MANU NATURE RESERVE FACILITIES, 74 NGA MANU NATURE RESERVE RD, WAIKANAE

1. **Present:**

Acting Chairman Aaron Passey; Councillors Steve Brown, Malcolm Francis, Andrew McGregor, Jennifer Yanko, Prof. Stephen Haslett, Jim Cook, Don Scott.

**Present via Zoom Link:** John Hancock

**In Attendance:**

**Fish and Game Staff:** Phil Teal, Dr Matt Kavermann, Hamish Carnachan

**Licence Holders:** Paul Browne

**Welcome and Confirmation of Agenda**

Mr Teal confirmed that Chairman Dewar was unavailable for the meeting and had tendered an apology. He requested that an acting Chairman be appointed for running the meeting.

It was moved that

***Councillor Aaron Passey be the Chairman for the purposes of running the Council Meeting on 8 August 2023.***

**Jim Cook/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

2. **Apologies:**

It was noted that apologies were received from:

Councillors Paul Dewar (Chairman), Richard McIntyre, Colin Shore

Staff: Ami Coughlan.

Licence holders: Paul Shortis, Leigh Johnson

It was moved

***that apologies be accepted***

**Aaron Passey/Malcolm Francis**

Carried

3. **Conflict of Interest**

The Conflicts of Interest Register was discussed - no additional conflicts specific to the agenda were noted and no further additions required to the Conflict of Interest register.

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 6 June 2023:**

Following consideration of the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish and Game Council of 6 June 2023 it was moved that

***the Minutes of the meeting of the Wellington Fish & Game Council of 6 June 2023 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.***

**Malcolm Francis/Jim Cook**

Carried

**5. Matters Arising:**

Councillor Brown noted the discussions and outcome that confirmed the restriction of use of treble hooks in sensitive fisheries within the Wellington region. He considered that efforts should be made to protect the values of sensitive fisheries that were already under pressure from the effects of climate change, tourism, and extremely effective fishing equipment. He sought consideration of defining the wider management objectives for sensitive fisheries – such as a rationale for ‘delivering’ a trophy river fishery – and what other management options could be looked at (such as fish size slot limits in addition to restricting lures with treble hooks) to achieve outcomes for identified areas. These fisheries could be defined by angling attributes such as scenic amenity value (pristine environment), size of fish, catch rate, ease of access, or high degree of solitude. Various characteristics were considered in a River Environment Classifications study conducted by NIWA (Martin Unwin) in 2012.

Councillor Brown considered that the headwater fisheries flowing from the Tararua Ranges were until recently outstanding trophy fisheries but Fish and Game did not proactively manage them for a particular outcome. Brief discussion ensued on the tools recently developed for managing angling pressure such as the Designated Water Fisheries system. The main purpose of the system was to manage overseas angling pressure on identified backcountry fisheries (with up to 70% of the angling pressure coming from non-resident anglers). While the Upper Rangitikei River was currently the only North Island fishery included in the systems, others could be added with appropriate justification. Information would need to be sought on changes in angler behaviour, angler usage, harvest take (via creel surveys), and defining what attributes need protecting (e.g. fish size via slot limits or harvest take via bag limit). The difficulty in achieving effective regulatory compliance at

these physically isolated sites was acknowledged, and the reliance on angler ethics to achieve compliance. Councillor Francis considered that more effective management focus should be to provide better (and easy) access to sites for a wide range of angler age cohorts. Councillor Scott noted that a wider perspective on freshwater angling opportunity should consider promoting perch fisheries for still-water fisheries.

It was agreed that staff would develop a discussion paper on how to define management goals for fishery outcomes based on various attributes – and consider effort (resources allocated to manage) to income (generated). This would help identify rivers to be considered for inclusion in the Designated Water system, and once identified would likely require a survey of angler opinions relating to the values being managed and/or protected.

Mr Teal noted the list of correspondence sent to NZ Fish and Game Council:

1. Indicating Wellington Fish and Game Council's support for the recommendation for licence fees and categories (based on the 2023/24 adult whole season sports fish licence fee being set at \$153 and that the adult whole season game licence is set at \$113 (inclusive of a \$5 fee for the Game Bird Habitat Stamp), including a \$5 fee being added to the sea run salmon licence endorsement (as a cost-recovery mechanism), and establishment of a new licence category called a Designated Waters Licence, available as a \$5 annual licence per Fish and Game region for resident anglers and as a day licence to non-resident anglers at a fee of \$40 (maximum 5 per season per region).
2. Indicating Wellington Fish and Game Council's support for the proposed Draft National Reserves Policy.
3. Indicating that Wellington Fish and Game Council does not support the proposed amendments to the Fish and Game definitions on resident and non-resident anglers – and for clarity that the definition for such should not rely solely on the definitions used by DoC Taupo fisheries and/or the Immigration Act.
4. Indicating that Wellington Fish and Game Council supported the concepts and intent of the remuneration policy to try and get internal consistency of remuneration, and also ensure staff remunerations remain competitive following General Market assessments. It was also noted that any Market Assessments must be made during the budgeting process to ensure Fish and Game can afford the remuneration recommendations and be aware of potential budget constraints.
5. Indicating the recommendation to the Minister of Conservation for the 2023/2024 Anglers Notice that there be no daily limit for perch and that the Upper Rangitikei River (north of the Ohinewaione Stream confluence) be classified as a Designated Water.

## 6. New Zealand Fish and Game Council Business

Councillor Haslett gave a brief overview of the three sub-committees formed by NZ Fish and Game Council:

1. Future Structure Working Group
  - Haven't formally reported back to NZC
  - Terms of Reference currently being defined.
  - In agreement that there were too many regions
  - Most considered that there were too many governors
  - Support amalgamations where occurring
  - Encourage regions to operationally amalgamate should they wish to.
2. Future Finance Working Group
  - Haven't formally reported back to NZC
  - Terms of Reference currently being defined.
  - External consultant (Gary Crawford) to provide support
3. Research Group
  - To consider research applications and manage the National Research Fund
  - Terms of Reference currently in draft form.
  - Has received two proposals from the Cawthron Institute: an economic assessment proposal, and one relating to the effects of climate change
  - Review and confirm a draft Research Strategy and process for considering research priorities and engaging with providers.

Councillor Haslett had received support from NZC councillors on his assessment of fundamental issues managing research programme including structure, funding, criteria for prioritising, and how projects should be managed (e.g. multi-year projects). He noted that another meeting on 14 August 2023 was planned to discuss these items – including the basis for membership which currently is three NZC councillors and NZC Chair (ex-officio), NZC CE, NZC contractor for research co-ordination, and North Canterbury Fish and Game CE. He considered that there needed to be better protocols and processes for prioritising research needs and engaging with providers – including selecting research that deal with information needs aligning with Fish and Game's core functions.

### • **NZ Council Zoom Meeting 15 June 2023**

Councillor Haslett reported on the New Zealand Fish and Game Council zoom meeting held on 15 June 2023 including:

- a. Confirmation of licence fees recommendations to be forwarded to the Minister of Conservation for approval following regional consultation, including the new Designated Water Licence
- b. Draft Performance Management Policy to be circulated to regional Fish and Game Councils for feedback.
- c. Discussion on Fish and Game's response to the proposed changes to the NBEA (Natural and Built Environment Act).
- d. Discussion on pre-circulating draft minutes prior to confirmation to provide transparency.

Discussions continue on the progress to implementing recommendations derived from the Ministerial Review – but focus has tended to be on generalities rather than a defined set of actions. NZ Council Chair had suggested another internal review (no external status) to address the issues identified but has not received much traction. It was seen as potentially yet another review that would take up a lot of resources and effort and would unlikely result in a different momentum for change.

After brief discussion it was moved that

***The report from Councillor Haslett on NZ Fish and Game Council business and meetings be received***

Jennifer Yanko/Jim Cook

Carried

## **7. Public forum**

Paul Browne provided a brief update on the management issues at Kilmore Lodge adjacent to Lake Wairarapa - noting that DOC had been to the site to inspect the building (first time in 25 years) and had received a high approval rating. He further noted that he remains impressed by the efforts and contributions of hunters to continue to upkeep the building to such a high standard. He confirmed that a formal list of assets was kept, including: a list of chattels, health and safety items, instructions for hut use, and photos of current state. He suggested a letter of appreciation be sent to each of the hunter groups that use the site to acknowledge their contribution in managing a shared asset for hunting.

Further discussion ensued on investigating alternative options for providing secure storage for firearms in addition to current practice.

The installation of an additional modern LED lighting strip was also imminent which provided an additional health and safety benefit.

8. **Health and Safety Reporting – June 2023 to July 2023**

Mr Teal confirmed that he had made the Health and Safety meetings of weekly frequency, and also provide an opportunity for more regular and timely health and safety discussions/updates.

It was moved that

***Council receives the Health and Safety Report for June 2023 and July 2023***

**Malcolm Francis/Jennifer Yanko**

Carried

9. **2022/2023 Annual Budget and Operational Work Plan**

Mr Teal confirmed the process by which the Annual Budget had been derived through the Fish and Game budgeting process, and how the Annual Plan had reflected those budgetary considerations.

Following brief discussions and clarification of specific items it was moved that

***the 2022/2023 Annual Operational Work Plan and 2022/2023 Financial Budget be adopted***

**Aaron Passey/Jim Cook**

Carried

10. **Legislative and Policy Review Considerations**

• **Update on Natural and Built Environment Act (NBEA)**

Mr Teal confirmed that Parliament's Environment Select Committee recommended that a clause be retained in the new legislation for the protection of the habitat of trout and salmon alongside the protection of indigenous species in the planned NBEA. The Select Committee also recognised the values that New Zealanders place on public access to lakes and rivers and recreational use and enjoyment of the natural environment and recommended that these values to be maintained and enhanced.

It was agreed to send a letter to NZ Council CE highlighting the positive outcome achieved and expressing thanks to the team that was involved in advocating for the outcome. This provides continued leverage for Fish and Game to advocate for habitat protection in the freshwater environment.

It was moved that

***Wellington Fish and Game Council send a letter to NZ Council CE acknowledging the efforts of the team to achieve the legislative outcome in the new NBEA legislation relating to the retention of the protection of trout and salmon habitat which will retain Fish and Game's continued advocacy function for their habitat.***

**Malcolm Francis/Jennifer Yanko**

Carried

- **Draft Performance Management Policy**

Council considered the paper for operational policy *Draft Performance Management Policy* by Jane Hutchings (HR Business Partner) issued on 30/6/2023 for consultation to regions by NZ Council. This is consistent with good operating practices in align with good employment principles and outlines an annual performance management cycle to assess performance objectives, behaviours, and training goals.

One of the purposes of consulting with governors is that they are responsible for directly managing Chief Executive performance but also setting the culture as a responsibility for all staff. Council still has an element of control to influence HR outcomes. Acting Chairman Passey noted that it was not specific on who undertakes the review and process – noting that currently a subcommittee of the Chair and Councillors McIntyre and Haslett liaise with the Chief Executive on performance matters.

After discussion it was agreed to support the policy in general – with it agreed that the principle of basing regional policy based on a good practice policy co-ordinated by NZ Council was a worthwhile approach. Councillor Francis concluded that if good governance or operational policy is developed, then it should be adopted and used by all councils as good practice. This removes the potential debate and tension as to whether its status is technically National Policy which has specific consultation and legal connotations.

Further discussion confirmed that the policy was good to use as presented but examples of KPIs should be appended to the policy to provide consistency in approach and guidance for best practice. This would be relevant to all assessments by management and also assessments undertaken by Councils for Chief Executives.

It was moved that

***Wellington Fish and Game Council indicate to NZ Council its approval and support of the draft Performance Policy with the suggestion of inclusion of potential KPIs that would be suitable for use in the assessment process cycle.***

**Malcolm Francis/Jim Cook**

Carried

- **Updates on Internal Policy Reviews**

Mr Teal indicated that internal policy updates would proceed in alignment with reviewing the commonalities and differences in the Taranaki and Wellington operational and governance policies.

## 11. **Ministerial Review of Fish and Game Governance**

Chairman Dewar had provided a brief written update (email 27 July 2023 to councillors) of progress made to reflecting recommendations made in the Ministerial Review.

- **Update of Meetings with Regional Chairs**

In addition, Chairman Dewar noted during meetings of regional Chairs that they had been supportive of Taranaki and Wellington's approach to amalgamate operational services with a view to governance amalgamation in due course.

Recent focus of regional Chairs had been to attend governance training webinars being co-ordinated by NZ Council.

- **Update of Governance Review Programme**

**Corporate Policy Review:** NZ Council have indicated that they now have a timetable for reviewing Corporate Policy

**Common Regional Policies** – regions would continue to develop policies that are contemporary, fit for purpose, and relevant to enable good practices to be more consistent within the organisation. This reiterates the principle that when good governance or operational policy is developed then it should be adopted and used by all councils as good practice.

### **Governance Training**

Governance training options from external providers had been sought and it was anticipated that this would be made available to all Fish and Game councillors in August and September 2023.

- **Discussions with Neighbouring Regions – Taranaki Working Group**

Mr Teal and Acting Chairman Passey provided an update of the meeting of Working Group on Taranaki/Wellington Fish and Game Amalgamation held on 24 July 2023. As part of the discussion a draft Terms of Reference was developed.

Discussion ensued on the draft Terms of Reference with it confirmed a preference for each region's NZ Council appointee be invited to be present as an observer – with the purpose of providing feedback to NZ Council on progress. In addition NZ Councillors could quickly communicate any additional assistance identified to progress the shared resources model and ultimately amalgamation.

Acting Chairman Passey noted that the concept provided for Wellington Fish and Game to provide managerial support on the basis that this would free up

resources for field staff with an operational focus. Councillor Brown confirmed that the decision to have shared resources has been made by Council and the decisions and detail of staff requirements would follow accordingly.

It was moved that

***the draft Terms of Reference be a basis for progressing the shared resources arrangement with Taranaki Fish and Game Council***

Malcolm Francis/Don Scott

Carried

Councillor Haslett noted that while the focus was on operational integration, there should be an active consideration of governance integration of the two Councils. Acting Chairman Passey concurred that there needs to be consideration of principles in defining what an amalgamated Council would look like (given the ability to make a legal change might be in the short term (within 6 months) to medium term (up to two years)).

- **Discussions with Neighbouring Regions – Hawke’s Bay**

Chairman Dewar noted in his update on 27 July 2023 that he and Mr Teal had met with the Chair of Hawke’s Bay Fish and Game Council to discuss amalgamation options – and that the Hawke’s Bay Council was still undecided on their future direction (i.e. stay as is, shared resources with Easter region and/or Wellington/Taranaki region, or amalgamation with either of the respective regions). Mr Teal noted that the Hawke’s Bay Chairman had been made aware of the arrangements with Taranaki region, and informed that whatever options that Hawke’s Bay preferred that this arrangement would continue unabated.

Mr Teal indicated that the Acting Manager of Hawke’s Bay had resigned on 1 August 2023 and that Hawke’s Bay Council were intending to have a meeting on 8 August 2023 to discuss options moving forward. The resignation had left Hawke’s Bay Fish and Game Council with minimal staff with no experience of Fish and Game matters, and also coincided with the formal reporting requirements for the 2022/2023 Financial Year.

Councillor Hancock considered that while Hawke’s Bay region was going through some difficulties, that Wellington Fish and Game (and the wider organisation per se) needed to provide assistance in working a way through the current situation. It was recognised that the region needed help as they were unlikely meeting their statutory responsibilities.

Discussion ensued on the current situation in Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council:

- the Acting Manager has employed staff without the normal requisite open market process, (without substantial experience or pay considerations), and
- the Acting Manager has not done any of the end of year reporting (Statement of Service Performance) that will highlight only partial achievement in project outcomes and abiding by good practice.

Discussion continued on the feasibility of Wellington Fish and Game Council offering assistance – either in part as shared resources arrangement or as a formal amalgamation as anticipated with Taranaki region. In terms of public perception, Fish and Game is seen as one entity and that the organisation is only as strong as its weakest link, so it was recognised that a wider organisational response might be required. Councillor Hancock that Fish and Game had a responsibility to focus on the best outcomes for the licence holders (in Hawke's Bay and wider).

A logical scenario provided considerable uncertainty as to the outcomes – given the current platform that exists in Hawke's Bay Fish and Game – and a substantial additional cost in time and staff resources from Wellington Fish and Game that might be required to meet core outputs required by statute. This directly coincides with staff's efforts to establish a shared resources arrangement with Taranaki region.

Discussion also considered how the governance arrangements that allowed this situation to develop in Hawke's Bay would be an impediment and/or barrier for progressing good stable management operations to achieve outcomes.

Councillor Francis sought clarification of the continuing status of operations at Hawke's Bay noting that it is still a separate legal entity – although the resource and species management function appearing to be not fully operational. Councillor Brown reiterated that there could be a wider organisational response to help Hawke's Bay region sort out any issues identified moving forward.

Councillor Scott highlighted the risk of Hawke's Bay region operating in an ineffective way to the wider organisation in that this wider concern regarding their performance could be highlighted by the Office of Auditor General's appointed auditor. The auditor will probably conclude it is financially sound, but the Statement of Service Performance (and supporting documentation) will likely show that core purpose and objectives are not being achieved – even if some explanation is provided by the effects of Cyclone Gabrielle.

Questions may be (and should be) asked as to the governance and operational effectiveness of that entity. He considered that we must assist Hawke's Bay region but not get too involved – especially if changes to governance are not clear.

After further discussion it was moved that

***Wellington Fish and Game Council is prepared to offer support to Hawke's Bay Fish and Game Council (if required) to help them meet their statutory obligations within available existing resources, and also consider any shared resources arrangements that are consistent with the arrangements with Taranaki Fish and Game Council.***

**Steve Brown/Jim Cook**

**Carried**

**12. Draft Sports Fish and Game Bird Management Plan**

**A. Developing workshop for Iwi engagement plan for Wellington Iwi**

Mr Teal noted that he was awaiting the completion of some advisory work on Mana Whenua engagement undertaken by Kahu Environmental (co-ordinated by NZ Council). Once this has been received, he intended to look for and confirm external providers to give advice on tikanga and protocols to allow meaningful and respectful dialogue.

**B. Developing workshop for setting regulations**

Mr Teal noted that this had not been progressed and may require a working group to scope issues including how to involve the wider Council – and wider organisation.

Councillor Brown reiterated previous reasoning for looking at simplification of the angling regulations, with a common perception from novice anglers and non-anglers is that there are “far too many rules included in the Angling Regulations”. He considered that this created an ‘elitist’ perception focused on methods rather than for managing harvest impacts.

Further discussion considered the view that rules that are too complicated may make a barrier to participation – including the angst of being potentially being non-compliant on a highly technical breach of regulations. It was considered prudent to request be sent to NZ Council to develop a research proposal to investigate how much resistance to undertaking trout fishing (and/or a barrier to participation) is due to the complicated nature of the regulations (as opposed to simpler marine fishing rules of numbers, size, and location).

Discussion also ensued on trying to get consistency of regulations across the country – including formatting of regulations.

It was then moved that

***Wellington Fish and Game Council send a request to NZ Council indicating a research need to get an understanding of the barrier to participation (including reduced participation) that is due to complicated rule structure, and whether there is significant effect on the recruitment of novice anglers. This would include development of a research brief and proposal.***

**Steve Brown/Don Scott**

Carried

**13. Project Report 1113 – River Control Trout Fishery Assessment**

Dr Kavermann provided an overview of data collection and interpretation in the Project Report presented. Councillor Hancock acknowledged the amount of work undertaken to gather this data and considered the findings needed to be highlighted advocacy positions to the relevant Regional Council to ensure floodway management practices are appropriate. Acting Chairman Passey concurred that the Regional Councils and other agencies such as Forest and Bird needed to be aware of the monitoring results.

Dr Kavermann confirmed that no Otaki River data was collected this year due to unsuitable surveying conditions in February 2023. He noted that he would present some of the findings to a meeting with the Flood Protection team on 1 September 2023.

Councillor Francis confirmed the report's findings that there had been a decline in fish numbers in the region – in particular the Hutt and Waikanae rivers – which might in part be attributed to weather patterns for both rivers, as well as a potential fish barrier (ineffective fish ladder) for the Waikanae River. He suggested a continued focus on this latter issue (including the lack of gravel extraction above the weir) with Greater Wellington Regional Council and Kapiti Coast District Council which operates a municipal water take in the near vicinity.

After further discussion it was moved that

***The Project Report 1113 River Control Trout Fisheries Assessment be received***

**Malcolm Francis/Steve Haslett**

Carried

**14. Project Report 1112 – Rangitikei River Trout Fishery**

Dr Kavermann presented the report on the Rangitikei River Trout Fishery – noting there was a gap in monitoring from the Moawhanga River this year due to large flood events in February 2023.

He noted that the Upper Rangitikei River monitoring had similar numbers of fish, but fish condition and size was exceptional.

After discussion it was moved that

***The Project Report 1112 Rangitikei River Fishery be received***

**Aaron Passey/Steve Brown**

Carried

Councillors acknowledged the great work undertaken by staff in undertaking the monitoring and subsequent evaluation.

**15. Licence Management System**

**A. Update on Licence Management System**

Mr Teal noted that the system was operating with no significant failures or significant faults. The contract for service provision with ESL is transitioning from 'development' phase to 'operational' phase. A list of bugs and other contractual requirements such as development of booking systems will be required before Fish and Game signs of the 'development' aspect of the contract.

There are two other functionalities – Designated Water function and Salmon Fishing Endorsement Licence - that have been developed and were essentially ready for operation once licences are available.

**B. Research Project on Licence Category Pricing Review**

Mr Teal provided an overview of this research project that was scheduled to start by the end of 2022 – to investigate and provide objective advice on the licence categories introduced from 2015 and ensure they are still fit for purpose.

The research project will now be undertaken in two stages - data cleansing and partial analysis. A further research brief was expected to be developed so that research providers could indicate interest in the project and provide a formal project proposal.

**16. R3 MARKETING UPDATE**

Mr Teal and Mr Carnachan provided an overview of the activities undertaken for the second half of the Game Season and activities prior to the start of the opening of the 2023/2024 Fishing Season.

**A. Marketing Update – Prior to Fish season**

- Magazine articles completed for Fish Magazine 2023

- Assisting NZ Council to co-ordinate Magazine preparation with new provider (note this is a potential one-off production by provider – debate on continuation of magazine is active)

Further discussion and clarification ensued on the change in provider for the production of the Fish and Game Special Issue magazine. The previous provider cancelled the contract and was changed to NZ Hunter as the service provider. Mr Carnachan undertook the role of Associate Editor to ensure that the Fish and Game NZ messaging was consistent and relevant.

Mr Carnachan noted that the medium-term future of the magazine was under active review by NZ Council – as well as other regional hardcopy options – noting the total costs are material (\$300,000+) and that the paper and mail out costs were always increasing. He further noted options to offset costs but revenues from advertising in the magazines was declining – in part due to a passive advertising sales strategy. The communications options being considered involved digital media/marketing as well as other formats – with their effectiveness in meeting the licence holder’s needs being assessed and considered. Councillor Brown considered the hardcopy option still met licence holders expectations so if it was cheaper to consider an online version then it would unlikely be a preferred option for them. Mr Carnachan acknowledged this would be a major transition if it was progressed but there may be an opt in opt out approach also considered.

**17. Communications**

Mr Teal gave a brief overview of the key recent communication actions. He also confirmed that Mr Carnachan was currently contracted to NZ Council for 0.2FTE (8 hours) per week to assist in preparation of press releases for NZ Council CE, as well as assisting in larger projects related to social licence campaign and management of the magazine special issue.

**18. Regional Planning Updates**

Mr Teal provided an overview of four regional planning projects that Wellington Fish and Game Council is actively engaged in:

**A. Horizons RC – One Plan – Plan Change 2 Appeal Update**

An update was be provided on the PC2 Appeal - nitrogen loss risk matrix development and use of GMP (Good Management Practices) as a principal tool for consenting – highlighting the main points in the memorandum of counsels for a potential joint hearing on Appeals to the Environment Court on similar matters. Options for a joint hearing being considered by the Environment Court judges.

**B. Horizons RC – Freshwater Futures Update**

Mr Teal updated that continued consultation and community engagement processes being undertaken by Horizons Regional Council. Horizons have released a summary of their river users survey conducted over summer – which had numerous angling spots noted on their mapping system. In the coming months their focus will be on finalising some definitions regarding Te Mana o te Wai with iwi, and working on specific topics of water quality and water quantity.

**C. GWRC – proposed changes to Regional Policy Statement**

Mr Teal noted that the hearings of submissions had commenced in mid-June 2023 with an expected timetable for completion being March 2024.

**D. Regional Plan Approach for NPS FM 2020 Implementation**

Mr Teal noted that NZ Council (and regional RM staff) are developing an RM Strategy to provide some guidance for multiple regions undertaking plan changes. This will involve development of Practice Notes (position statements are being developed), and identifying opportunities for appropriate advocacy efforts for various Regional Plan reviews.

The meeting was adjourned for dinner at 6:15pm and the meeting was reconvened at 7:00pm.

Councillor Hancock left the meeting (via Zoom) at 6:15pm

**19. Western Region Resource Consent Applications**

Mr Teal provided a brief update on the following projects:

**A. Otaki and Waikanae River Catchments –**

No progress to report due to no engagement by GWRC with iwi representatives.

**B. Hutt River “emergency works”**

Emergency works were undertaken by GWRC upstream of Melling due to significant erosion on the true right bank – threatening infrastructure.

**C. Hutt River – RIVER LINK project update will be provided.**

A substantial project intended to recontour the Hutt River for about two kilometres near Melling Bridge have resource consents granted by the Environment Court. This work will include substantial work in the river, and be prolonged (over 2 years). It is anticipated that work will start in spring 2023 for the summer construction period.

Mr Teal confirmed that Fish and Game had established a contract to monitor the numbers of trout in the river reaches affected – but more importantly ensure spawning had occurred in the upper catchment to maintain the robustness of the trout fishery.

**20. Lake Wairarapa Update**

**A. Post Treaty Settlement Update – Implementation of Settlement Legislation**

Dr Kavermann provided an update of the Wairarapa Moana meeting and confirmed that the Statutory Reserve Board had not met formally and that Iwi membership on the Board was being finalised.

Dr Kavermann noted that the Wairarapa Moana Governance Group was made aware of the monitoring requirement for fish in the lake and surrounds still required a Fish and Game permit for taking fish.

He noted that transfer of Land Titles to Kahungunu and Rangitaane as a Reserve has been processed for most of the land titles since 7 March 2023.

A draft briefing paper from Fish and Game to the Statutory Reserve Board has been prepared – outlining the issues for management moving forward while recognising the traditional uses of the lake by all parties.

**B. Exotic Fish Management Plan Progress**

Dr Kavermann confirmed that the Fish Restoration Plan developed by Cawthron Institute was received and feedback from Fish and Game was given. He noted that the report was received but not approved by the Wairarapa Moana Governance Group.

**C. Fish Removal Project**

Dr Kavermann noted that the Fish Removal Project on Barton’s Lagoon and Matthews Lagoon (Kahutara Wetland) had been operational for over ten years (and no longer a ‘research project’). The objectives of the work is ill-defined – with an apparent goal of trying to suppress fish numbers in an open system in the expectation that indigenous fish numbers will commensurately increase.

**D. Jobs for Nature Project Management – Wairarapa Moana Research Funding and Restoration Plan**

Dr Kavermann confirmed that nearly \$1,000,000 worth of trees had been planted on the margins of the lake and wetland and that pest control operations had also been part of the management programme. There have been no reports yet on survival rates of plantings. The funding for this project will expire in 2024. It is unlikely that the outcomes will be lasting or a legacy of substantial improvement to lake water quality or habitat quality.

Discussion ensued on the importance of establishing and maintaining a good working relationship with the Statutory Reserve Board.

After brief discussion it was moved that

***Council receive the report on Wairarapa Moana activities and management issues***

**Jim Cook/Andrew McGregor**

Carried

**21. Research Update**

**A. E-DNA Project**

Massey University researchers (now independent consultants) have completed a manuscript outlining the protocols for sampling ready for field trials and use for sampling river water samples to sample environmental DNA (eDNA) and nuclearDNA for brown and rainbow trout in spawning streams.

**B. Native Fish – Trout Interaction –**

Manuscripts have been prepared and submitted for publishing outlining the findings from Ami Coughlan’s research. Further work is being undertaken to focus on trout and mahinga kai species interactions to provide refined perspectives. Ms Coughlan has been preparing expert evidence for Otago Fish and Game Council in their Regional Plan Review hearings.

**C. Research Strategy being developed by NZ Council**

NZ Council is preparing a review and update of the current Research Strategy. Additional work is required to include process for prioritising research, and well as incorporating a statutory requirement to consider regional research needs.

**22. Licence Holder Engagement**

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of initiatives to engage with licence holders including event management for:

**A. Junior Novice Fishing Days**

- a. Otaki Site –some discussions in preparation of funding opportunities and the form of the event(s) for 2023
- b. Hokowhitu Lagoon – nothing to report but funding will be sought
- c. Marton Reservoir – continued promotion of fisheries by District Council
- d. Capital Trout Centre– Cleaned out ponds in preparation of arrival of next lot of fish in late August.
- e. Looking at additional sites – Carterton, Kakariki, Palmerston North, Kapiti

## **B. Woman on The Fly Programme**

Regular casting days planned and/or completed. Regular communication between participants on email and Facebook have seen the growth of participants involved.

It was noted that Fish and Game had an allocation of funding pledged for managing female engagement events that was not drawn upon last November- with efforts by Women on the Fly securing additional funding from sponsorships and grants. A request to (part) fund an upgrade of their website to better manage participants was discussed as potentially appropriate use of those funds. Before Fish and Game could consider the full cost on upgrading a website, further information was sought including alternative additional sponsors.

### **23. Access Issues – Update**

Mr Teal noted that the relationship developed with the new Forest Managers Recreational Staff member had seen access to Santoft Forest (Hunting) extended for two months – to cover the upland game hunting season.

### **24. Management Report – 1 June – 31 July 2023**

Discussion ensued on how to inform Fish and Game of changes to the conditions of access points – some resulting from permissions, but some resulting from flooding damage as experienced in February 2023 on the Eastern rivers.

It was then moved that

***Council receive the Management Report for period 1 June to 31 July 2023***

**Malcolm Francis/Jennifer Yanko**

Carried

### **25. Fishing Licence And Game Licence Sales**

Mr Teal provided a brief overview of licence sales with the end of the Financial Year approaching:

- **Fish Licence Sales**

for the 2022/2023 fish licence sales LEQs down 282 LEQs.

- **Game Licence Sales**

for the 2023 game licence sales LEQs were down 119 LEQs.

It was then moved

***That the Fish Licence Sales Report for 2022/23 to 31 July 2023 and Game Season 2023 as at 31 July 2023 be received***

**Malcolm Francis/Steve Brown**

Carried

**26. Expenditure Report / Financial Transactions**

Mr Teal confirmed that there had been a sale of a surplus vehicle over the period via Turners Car Auction.

He also advised that there was an update to the Travel Expenses form.

It was then moved that

***Council Receive and Accept the Expenditure Reports to 30 June 2023 and Financial Transactions for May and June 2023.***

**Jim Cook/Steve Brown**

Carried

**27. Correspondence / Media**

Discussion ensued on the positive publicity obtained about local Kapiti anglers being recognised for their voluntary efforts and contributions.

There was additional discussion on the publicity around the successful lobbying of politicians regarding the NBEA to protect recreational rights.

**28. Recognition And Contribution Awards - Deferred**

Acting Chairman Passey reminded Councillors to notify the Council at upcoming meetings of those they consider worthy of recognition for contributions. It was noted that there was a list of names that Council was using to recognise as time and location permitted.

**29. Wellington Conservation Board Liaison**

It was noted that the upcoming meeting of the Conservation Board is scheduled for 11 August 2023 in Palmerston North.

It was also noted that the Taranaki Conservation Board was actively seeking interaction with Fish and Game Councils – which appeared to be in contrast to their Wellington counterparts.

**30. General Business**

Councillor Francis noted the current impact of the heat wave in Europe and its impact on fisheries - in particular the increase in water temperatures.

Mr Teal confirmed that Dr Adam Canning had done some relevant modeling to assess the effects of climate change – not only on changes in river water temperatures but the effects on river hydrology from increased frequency and intensity of weather events.

Mr Carnachan noted that John Hayes (Fisheries Scientist) had also written an article for the upcoming Special Issue of the Fish and Game magazine that dealt with the potential effects on fisheries from increased disturbance resulting from increased frequency of weather events (linked to climate change).

Discussion ensued on what practical measures could be taken by Fish and Game in light of potential changes in water temperatures – including “stop fishing” guidelines when the temperature of the water reached 20°C as is currently practiced in fishing competitions in river systems.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:05pm

***Next Meeting to be held: Meeting on Tuesday, 10 October 2023 at Club Wairarapa 20 Essex Street, Masterton at 3pm.***

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_