

MINUTES OF THE GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING 20 APRIL 2015

Held at Department of Conservation Head Office Wellington

Present: Don Hammond (Chair), Bill O’Leary, Garry Ottmann, , Mark Brough, Roger Duxfield, Roy Sloan, Steve McFall, Terry Pierson, Carol Watson

Jenny Wotten (Executive Officer), Ben Reddiex (DOC)

Also in attendance: Minister Peter Dunne, Mike Slater, Lou Sanson, Fraser Seifert (accompanying Minister), Bryce Johnson, Lindsay Lyons, Marie Long

Welcome and Introductions: Don Hammond welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Councillors and visitors. Don thanked Ben for hosting us at the DOC Head Office.

Apologies: Geoff Kerr, Alec McIver, Simon Guild - AATH Committee

Motion 6/1: Moved Garry Ottmann /Terry Pierson: That apologies be accepted. CARRIED
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Confirmation of Agenda: Session with Marie Long to be added at 2.45pm. An agenda item also needs to be added re: working with Tuhoë.

Commonalities of interest document – Don Hammond asked Councillors to revisit the document to identify areas of conflict that might need to be annotated, including commercial interest – in the interest of public transparency **Action item 6/1.**

1. Minutes of previous meeting 23 February 2015:

Jenny Wotten to check date of SCI report. The Minutes having been previously circulated, were accepted as read.

Motion 6/2: Moved Terry Pierson/ Steve McFall: that the Minutes of the 23 February 2015 Meeting be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting. CARRIED

Matters arising: Covered under Action Point responses.

2. Action Point Responses –

- a. Action item 5/1 Garry Ottmann to arrange a presentation of different bait types at a future meeting.
- b. Action item 4/11 Bill O’Leary advised that NZDA website acknowledges endorsement of GAC and GAC logo will be added at a later stage with GAC approval.
- c. Action item 5/7 – Don Hammond to write to DOC requesting a list of the next 12 months planned operations. GAC will set up a working group comprising Don Hammond, Garry Ottmann, Roger Duxfield, Bill O’Leary and Steve McFall who will liaise with TB Free and DOC to call a meeting in early May. Ben Reddiex undertook to advise the GAC by Thursday 23 April of the earliest date that DOC would be able to provide the list of areas of planned operations for the next 12 months. GAC will circulate the list of areas of planned operations to GAC stakeholders for feedback. Garry Ottmann to follow up with TB Free and NZDA to coordinate dates with DOC.
- d. Action item 5/8 GAC website wording “GAC representing recreational hunters” is too narrow focussed and needs to be expanded. Steve to send Ben the revised text for amendment on the DOC website. **Action item 6/2.** The word ‘sponsorship’ in relation to other organisation’s links on GAC website is misleading and will be replaced with something more appropriate. Steve McFall advised that the website might move to a local NZ server instead of USA.
- e. Bill O’Leary to report back later this month Action item 5/12.

- f. Motion 5/4 Appointment of CEO – Don Hammond provided an update, advising that the favoured option at this stage was a 6 month fixed term contract due to constrained resources. This needs to progress as quickly as possible and one suggestion has been to appoint someone on secondment from a government agency.
- g. Action item 5/13 Strategic Plan – final version should be available today. The draft was sent to the Minister on 21 April for his information. Our next priority is to set the GAC Annual Work Plan. The Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually to adapt to the changing environment. Bearing in mind restraints imposed by lack of resourcing and personnel, GAC needs to be mindful that in setting our short term & long term goals and Annual Work Plan, we liaise with DOC and the Minister every step of the way. The Annual Work Plan is due to be determined by the next full Council meeting. Councillors need to look at the Strategic Plan urgently and identify which parts of the plan are the most important and how parts of the plan can be worked on in tandem noting that trade-offs might be necessary **Action item 6/3**. The first draft of the Annual Work Plan will be undertaken by Don Hammond and Garry Ottmann by the end of this week **Action item 6/4**.
- h. Parliamentary Hunting Trip – Garry was pleased to be able to report that the GAC had secured Mt Nicolas Station for the Hunting Trip in July. A few MPs have already confirmed their attendance. Councillors are also welcome to participate and Ben Reddix and others from DOC with an interest in the GAC. Steve McFall to invite Maori Electorate MPs or consider alternative options such as pig hunting. **Action item 6/5**.
- i. Action item 4/6 Jenny/Carol to write to Ian Cooksley advising that the Bowhunting permit conditions document incorporating Carol’s comments is now considered to be finalised and has been circulated (cc letter to Ben).
- j. **Action item 6/6**. Arising from Action 4/14 new ‘Research’ tab to go on website putting up SCI paper and Kaylyn McBrearty’s research **Action item 6/7**.
- k. In relation to the Review of the GAC Act (Section 40) Ben Reddix suggested that each full Council meeting the GAC could have an agenda item which focusses on a specific part of the Act. This would enable the strengths/weaknesses in the Act to be identified and flagged to the Minister for early awareness instead of leaving it all until the end of the Review period. Don Hammond will introduce a standing agenda item for meetings and consult the Minister on the best process for identifying and reporting deficiencies **Action item 6/8**.

3. Correspondence and Feedback:

Action item arising out of letter to the NZAGE, compilation of standards. Capture at next meeting **Action item 6/9**.

<p>Motion 6/3: Moved Roger Duxfield/Mark Brough: That inward correspondence be accepted and outward correspondence be approved.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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- 4. **Lou Sanson, Director General of DOC, address to Council** – Lou thanked the GAC Councillors for their hard work and achievements since their appointment and amongst other issues discussed his role in relation to the GAC, and matters that impact on game animals. Lou was especially interested in any ideas the GAC might have for reducing the incidence of hunting accidents. His address concluded with a discussion about pigs, kauri dieback and ongoing iwi consultation. Don said GAC have an interest here as pigs fall within our area of responsibility, Steve to get in touch with the Kauri Project Manager to talk about pig hunting **Action item 6/10**.

- 5. **Alex Gale Presentation of online hunter training program:** Alex provided background to the development of his online hunter training programme and presented some of the 14 different modules including basic firearm safety, finding Hunter & Firearms Clubs and information about

organisations involved in hunting such as NZDA, the Police, Mountain Safety Council, Fish & Game etc with links to their website. The programme incorporates an online quiz and real life hunting accident stories, with the permission of the families involved. Aside from a few technical issues, Alex was asked if the program and its content had been endorsed by hunters and organisations with expertise as best practice and how new issues could be added in and other areas updated.

Alex would like to explore opportunities to progress uptake of the website in conjunction with the GAC. Alex will send a new link to GAC to enable Councillors to have a more in-depth look. Alex wants this online training product to be a joint venture between himself and GAC with us being the statutory authority and him being the product developer. A new Game Management Module could be added as well as a pig hunting module. Council to discuss later and decide how to move forward with this. Don Hammond thanked Alex for travelling to Wellington to present his product.

- 6. DOC Update:** Ben Reddiex commented on the Community Conservation Partnerships Fund process and noted Bill's contribution to the Recreation Consortium Project. He spoke about DOC internal planning processes in regards to developing a list of planned aerial 1080 pest control operations (see earlier action point responses). If the GAC decides to have a booth at Sika Show, DOC would be interested to see what synergies may exist with the DOC stand. Ben outlined the process for regulations to be implemented for the AATH Code of Practice, which is scheduled to be completed in February 2016. This includes the Department developing the policies to support the regulations, consulting other government departments and groups, going through the submission process, after which they will be submitted to Cabinet for approval, go through the drafting process and be gazetted. Ben noted that at a minimum this process will need to be followed for any trophy levy regulations. Don thanked Ben for his ongoing contribution to Council.

7. Financial Matters

a. Account balances	Feb-20
Investment on call	\$60,899.42
Current Account	<u>\$20,617.30</u>
	\$81,516.72
Plus income	\$1,538.77
	\$83,055.79
Less expenses	\$17,658.80
Balances	Feb 19
Investment on call	\$61,191.90
Current account	\$4,205.09
	\$65,396.99

Tax return time: Certificate of exemptions should have been issued for self-employed people, please give a copy to Terry **Action 6/11**.

Motion 6/4: Moved Terry Pierson/Roger Duxfield: That the financial report be accepted and that payments made be approved.	CARRIED
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- b. **Fetch Payments system:** Terry provided some background on the Kiwibank authority which will allow the GAC payment system to be set up (as per their instructions).

Motion 6/5: Moved Roger Duxfield/Garry Ottmann: The Council approves and ratifies the Letter of Offer from Kiwibank Ltd dated 19 March 2015 and the terms and conditions documents that will apply to Fetch Web payments merchant service facilities that are referred to in the Letter of Offer signed by Don Hammond and Terry Pierson on 23 March 2015. CARRIED

- c. **Zero rated levies:** IRD has agreed on a ruling from 2003 that levies are zero rated.
- d. **Budget:** The draft budget that Don Hammond and Garry Ottmann prepared, covering the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, needs to be altered for the Annual Plan and be based on the estimated resources required to achieve our goals. The GAC needs to identify which are our most important goals, where those goals fit into the next 5 years, how those activities will be funded and how long it will take the GAC to become self-funded. See earlier agenda item for action needed.

8. Minister's address: Minister Peter Dunne was pleased to hear Don Hammond on the radio last week talking about the problems currently affecting Fiordland and AATH/WARO. He said it is good to see that the GAC is increasingly being consulted on these issues and that prior to the GAC being set up there was no organisation to which issues such as this could be addressed. It is important that the Council is seen as an independent and credible voice for people to turn to.

The main topic of the Minister's address however, was the Review of the GAC Act as prescribed in Section 40 which states that the Minister must make a report not later than 3 years after the commencement of the Act, reviewing its operation, reporting on the review and making recommendations to the House of Representatives. Effectively, this means that a report from the GAC needs to go to Minister in the next 12 months to be reviewed in time with Act expectations. Questions will be asked about how well the GAC has succeeded against its objectives and own goals hence the urgency for the GAC to look at its Strategic Plan and prioritise which actions need to be undertaken within the next year and each year thereafter. Our Operational Plan leads to budget decisions and gives the Minister confidence that we are on track. The Minister will be expecting recommendations as to whether the Act is still fit for purpose, too ambiguous and/or whether it is significantly deficient in some way. It is important that the GAC introduces a regular review process. Budgetary matters are very pressing and our financial position is very precarious. The issue of appointing a CEO and running a National Office, needs to be put into place as soon as it is established how it will be funded and how our current financial shortfall might be addressed. The Minister wants our Review recommendations as early as June and no later than November next year which will allow any necessary Bills to be drafted and put through Parliament.

It was mentioned that other potential revenue streams may exist (e.g. firearm and ammunition levies). The Minister said that each of these elements will take its own degree of time to investigate and the GAC would need to be quite specific about the projected level of income that would be generated, how we would go about enforcing it and collecting it. The Minister then spoke about other matters including recent hunting accidents and hunter training and safety. Don Hammond updated the Minister on GAC involvement in the current SPCA case. The Minister spoke about illegal hunting and the various enforcement agencies involved and GAC responsibilities in this area. The Minister concluded by saying he is very happy with the general direction of the Game Animal Council and our relationship and how it has grown and developed over the last year.

9. Address from the CEO Bryce Johnson and Chair of Fish & Game, Lindsay Lyons: Bryce and Lindsay spoke about areas of shared interest with GAC and commonalities and gave some advice to Council. They circulated several handouts: Overseas Investment Act 2005 – Sensitive Lands, Walking Access Act 2008 Fish & Game extracts and Political Parties Speak.

10. HOSI: the Working Group now has a document they are confident about and Garry Ottmann is ready to circulate. Garry asked Councillors to provide feedback by 4 May 2015 **Action 6/12**. The Working Group will be taking advice from DOC in the first instance and will provide the draft to Ben Reddix as a starting point.

11. Address by Mike Slater: Mike is pleased how the Department's relationship is progressing with the GAC and said that this bodes well for continuing difficult debates. A question and answer session followed.

12. WARO: Roger Duxfield circulated a GAC Progress report on WARO Concessions. Don welcomed Marie Long, Director of Planning & Permissions, Policy and Regulatory Services Group, to join us for a discussion about WARO. Her attendance had been requested following a meeting between DOC and GAC Councillors on 14 April about DOC consultation during their review process and whether recreational hunters, NZDA or the GAC had been consulted. It is Marie Long's view that the community was adequately consulted through local based conversations & local partnership agreements about how to manage places and also through CMS processes on the ground and in practice already. Marie said it was the first review in 5 years and outlined the three different components of their review:

- The flexibility of concessions– the present provisions allow areas to be taken out of WARO process or added in.
- Completely changing WARO permit conditions (more contentious) – the possibility of changing the existing conditions with the approval of everyone who currently holds a permit with the goal of providing a more sustainable venison industry. Operators want longer term licences for financial surety.
- Reducing the number of operators – if you haven't used your permit within 3 years then the Department will look at cancelling it.

Marie advised that it is being proposed that the WARO industry forum that had previously disbanded might be re constituted to initiate discussions about issues that operators or potential operators want to engage with DOC and GAC on. There is an opportunity for GAC and the NZDA to be part of these discussions. Draft documents have thus far been provided to applicants but the GAC is not an applicant so hasn't been included in the process and hasn't been given the opportunity to comment on which areas have been opened up or closed to concession operators. Marie questioned our jurisdiction in this process saying it was only a review process. The GAC had previously made a submission to DOC last year but had no response prompting Roger Duxfield to call the meeting with them on 14 April. Bill O'Leary expressed his concern to Marie Long that NZDA has had no input to the process and that there was no consultation either into the process or through the CMSs. Don Hammond said that stakeholders, GAC and the NZDA felt disenfranchised and asked DOC to look at their processes.

The GAC has received correspondence proposing alternative methods of issuing WARO concessions as well as correspondence from other operators and processing companies who are unhappy about the current situation. Marie said this was contrary to what DOC were hearing from many in the industry that they want to maintain the status quo for now even though the industry is going through a period of change. It is DOC's view that they have listened to the predominant voices being the operators and the processors and have been asked to leave it as it is for the next 3 years. DOC will be gathering comments from the applicants on the draft report, assess and provide a final report to the decision-maker.

Don Hammond asked for clarification as to how specific CMSs are for WARO – some of them refer to WARO but do not include specific detail. He noted that the CMS was in effect a Policy or Planning framework within which management activities were carried out. WARO concessions are a management activity and so are not included in depth in the CMS process. Thus stakeholders have not had the opportunity to be heard. He accepted that the Department has taken a decision not to notify the WARO review, but he asked for this to be reconsidered. CMS provides a policy framework but this review has gone a step further which requires public consultation and consultation with the GAC beforehand.

Don Hammond also noted that as the venison price was so low, it was an ideal opportunity to completely review the WARO industry to ensure that it was a useful tool for managing game animal herds and create an economically sustainable industry for operators. He suggested that the privatisation of a public good was something that had happened when the QMS (Quota Management System) for fish was introduced and this now allowed good management of those resources rather than the previous boom and bust industry. This had strong parallels to current game animal management discussions and may well offer some lessons.

13. Export Levy: Roger Duxfield circulated a brief report concerning trophy fees DOC currently charges commercial operators for hunting game animals on public land. He met with Marie Long and Ben Reddiex last week. Under the NZPHGA bulk concession with DOC, the trophy fee was added to the daily rate that operators pay to DOC when taking paying clients on to public land. The fee structure was first discussed with DOC in 2009 and it was proposed back then that when the GAC was formally constituted, it would want to capture the funds instead. DOC undertook to make a decision on this. The GAC would need written approval from DOC to collect these levies. The current voluntary Trophy Levy by members of NZPHGA is in place and about to go live. Currently being discussed with DOC is the takeover by GAC of the Certificate of Origin and Export Certificate together with the Trophy Levy. If formally agreed, GAC needs to sharpen up its levy system certification process to a standard that can be accepted internationally. Also the GAC website is currently too slow and there are still some issues with Kiwibank which means that it is not ready for use by the commercial sector yet. At this point in time voluntary levies are the best we can do. There are also some minor word changes to run past the DOC.

14. General Business:

- a. Roger Duxfield suggested that when Council makes decisions by consensus during email consultation, that these decisions be given the same status as motions during meetings.
- b. Steve McFall circulated a document NZPHA advice to the GAC on a policy for dog access into Te Urewera and a discussion was held on the subject and Tuhoe in general. Don Hammond, Alec McIver and Steve McFall will continue to liaise with the Tuhoe and make recommendations regarding the use of hunting dogs in Te Urewera.
- c. Kaylyn McBrearty's email in respect to Wakatipu White-tail was discussed and agreed that any suggestions be sent directly to Kaylyn.
- d. Domain Names: In response to the circulated IRD advice, it was agreed that no further registrations of additional domain names needed to be registered at this stage.

15. Councillors only session: Following Alex Gale's presentation it was decided that a Working Group comprising Carol Watson, Roy Sloan, Bill O'Leary, Garry Ottmann, Terry Pierson and Geoff Kerr (and in consultation with Ian Cooksley) be appointed to look at the issues (such as it being theory based information with no practical component, the program still being in the development phase, NZ

focus, compliments police licence test, fills a gap that currently exists, contractual issues, Best Practice and/or Standard Practice, lack of other options at this stage).

Motion 6/5: Moved Terry Pierson/Roger Duxfield: That the GAC appoint a Working Group to look at Alex Gale's online hunter training program and make recommendations to the Council.

CARRIED

16.Next meeting planning: Don Hammond said the Council's original idea to alternate the meetings between the North and South Island was probably not necessary anymore as there has been minimal attendance by members of the public and that our priority at this stage should be to limit costs as much as possible and hold meetings at the most accessible locations for all Councillors. It was decided therefore that the next meeting will be held at the Department of Conservation National Office in Wellington on 6 July 2015.

Meeting closed at 4.20pm.