

## MINUTES OF THE GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING 28 AUGUST 2019

### DOC OFFICE, CASHEL STREET, CHRISTCHURCH

**Present:** Don Hammond (Chair), Carol Watson, Richard Burdon, Roger Duxfield, Rachael Dean, Stephen Hall, Steve McFall, Tim Gale, Sharon Salmons, Jenny Wotten (Executive Officer)

**Also in attendance:** Garry Ottmann, Geoff Kerr and Hayden Cox (contractors) Rod Treder (DOC), Ben Reddix (DOC), Amber Bill (DOC), James Holborow (DOC), Ken Hughey (Chief Science Advisor DOC)

**Apologies:** Hon Eugenie Sage, Minister of Conservation & Alec McIver

- 1. Welcome, Agenda, Health & Safety:** Don Hammond welcomed councillors and visitors and provided a health & safety briefing. Don Hammond welcomed newly appointed Councillors Steve McFall, Sharon Salmons & Tim Gale and recognised Rachael Dean's recent NZOM Honours followed by a presentation to past Councillors Geoff Kerr and Garry Ottmann.
- 2. Agenda:** Discussion on Bowhunter training. Forest & Bird 'Bird of the Year competition', Mark Beardsley will drop in to talk about Permit System revamp, and deer as pet food added to agenda.

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| <b>Motion 24/1:</b> Moved Steve McFall/Tim Gale: that the agenda be confirmed. | CARRIED |
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| <b>Motion 24/2:</b> Moved Don Hammond/Stephen Hall: that the Council go into committee. | CARRIED |
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| <b>Motion 24/3:</b> Don Hammond/Stephen Hall: that the Council go out of committee. | CARRIED |
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- 3. Minutes of previous meeting 20 May 2019** were taken as read with minor alterations.

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| <b>Motion 24/4:</b> Moved Richard Burdon/Roger Duxfield: that the Minutes of the 20 May 2019 Meeting be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting. | CARRIED |
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#### 4. Matters arising: Minutes 20 May 2019:

- a. Kaweka Liaison Group** - Garry Ottmann reported on his attendance at a recent meeting.
- b. Bowhunter AGM** - Carol Watson reported on the discussion around their Code of document which is to undergo more changes.
- c. Tuhoe & Te Urewera** – Action 22/1 Don Hammond, Alec McIver & Cam Speedy to continue their liaison with Ngai Tuhoe.

#### 5. Action table: Remove outstanding actions now superseded by the responsibilities of the contractor.

- Action 21/2 (similar to 22/4) delete both and replace with new **Action item 24/1** Don Hammond and Geoff Kerr to draft a letter to the Minister cc Rod Treder
- Action 20/3 – Roger Duxfield reported that the AATH Section of DOC has moved to Hamilton and there have been no new concessions issued yet.
- Action 20/4 – Roger Duxfield is liaising with the NZ Police as further issues arise
- Action 21/1 – Geoff Kerr & Garry Ottmann to explore idea of sponsoring a student with stakeholders
- Action 21/2 – linked to Tenure Review Process, remove
- Action 21/3 – Hunter Permit System – Mark Beardsley of DOC to provide an update to the GAC.
- Action 21/4 – Rachael Dean to advise when this has been completed, Geoff to be removed from signatories, Jenny Wotten to contact Kiwibank.
- Action 22/2 – Geoff Kerr to action
- Action 23/4 – Garry Ottmann to attend a Biodiversity Workshop on 29 August 2019

- Action 23/5 – Geoff Kerr to liaise with Matthew Hall next week
- Action 23/7 – re lead bullets, Garry Ottmann to progress
- Action 23/8 – Don Hammond advised there is a role for the GAC going forward to understand when Regional Pest Management Plans are being reviewed and to engage with Regional Councils to understand what impact they may have on game animals.

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| <p><b>Motion 24/5:</b> Moved Don Hammond/Roger Duxfield that Geoff Kerr be removed from the list of approved signatories in Kiwibank.</p> | <p><b>CARRIED</b></p> |
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6. **Commonalities of interest:** document as circulated, it's important to keep the register up to date.

7. **Chairman's report** – taken as read.

**8. Management Report:**

- a. **Funding** – Garry Ottmann reported on a meeting with NZPHGA executive. The NZPHGA will develop a proposal to put to their membership at their AGM regarding a trophy levy or something similar. Implementation would be before the next hunting season begins (Feb 2020). From there a recommendation will go to the Minister. **Action item 24/2** Garry Ottmann to prepare a paper by 10<sup>th</sup> September for the guides to consider.

Funding the GAC – by 10 September Garry Ottmann will have prepared an overall plan for funding the GAC, **Action item 24/3**. Once approved, this will be forwarded to the Minister.

- b. **Education, Safety & Training** – Garry Ottmann spoke to his paper on developing and delivering a hunter education program. The Minister's Letter of Expectation asks the GAC to implement a comprehensive hunter safety and education plan. Discussion about the GAC role, alongside NZDA and MSC etc. Recommendations approved as follows:

- The GAC will develop a comprehensive plan before proceeding further.
- The GAC will design its own video based proprietary hunter education program in a series of modules for delivery online free of charge and without commercial content.
- The GAC will enlist the assistance and participation of the whole hunting sector in developing and delivering the program.
- The first module produced will be a program outline and Getting Started in Rifle Hunting

- c. **Communications** – Hayden Cox gave his Communications Report. There was discussion around various projects Hayden Cox would like to run on social media of which the Council was mostly supportive.

- d. **Annual Report and Statement of Performance Expectations:** A draft 2018-19 Annual Report has been prepared and the financial statement is nearly completed ready for audit. A draft Statement of Performance Expectations and forecast financials has also been completed. We expect to be able to meet our statutory responsibilities for both within the allowable timeframe.

- e. **Tahr on Game Estates Project Update:** The remaining Bull tahr will continue to be monitored until the end of November. This will be 12 months since their release at High Peak and at that point we will need to decide what to do with the two tahr as they cannot remain at High Peak.

- e. **ZIP Tahr Study:** The second application of poison has been applied and all the tahr survived. ZIP has another 5 weeks or so of work to do in the area then Geoff Kerr & Garry Ottmann will decide how best to retrieve to collars.

**f. Statutory Processes:**

Regional Pest Management Plans - in the last 12 months the following councils have reviewed and consulted on their plans and have either announced their final plan or will do shortly; Auckland, Southland, Wellington, Otago, Hawke's Bay, Tasman, Bay of Plenty. The GAC has not had input into all these plans but is now going through all the plans to identify any areas of concern.

Himalayan Tahr Control Plan - Garry Ottmann and Geoff Kerr continue to work with Stakeholders and DOC to progress of the current operational plan and the formulation of a new Operational Plan for period September 2019 to June 2020. Geoff and Garry represented the Council during the DOC consultation process on the new plan. GAC will assist DOC in testing a hunting app that will enable recreational hunter kills to be captured and included in totals. This was a critical deficiency of the current operational plan.

**9. Tahr update including Recreational Hunting App:** Ben Reddiex gave a presentation on the tahr programme. The 2019/20 tahr operational plan is due next week.

James Holborow (DOC) outlined that an (outcome led) operational plan would be completed by June 2020 and the GAC will be involved in the development. The next step is a longer-term plan, including Ngāi Tahu, covering all aspects of the next 5-10 years.

Dr Ken Hughey is the Chief Science Advisor to the DOC and co-authored the Himalayan Tahr Plan 1993. Ken also discussed the longer-term plan development required for tahr management.

**10. Financial and Administrative matters/Delegations:** A Work Plan and Budget for 2019-2020 was presented along with operational financial reports. The Minister has provided her Letter of expectation setting out streams of work she would like to see carried out and provided an appropriation of \$200,000.

**Motion 24/6:** Moved Roger Duxfield/Rachael Dean: that the financial reports be approved, and that expenditure to-date be approved. CARRIED

**Motion 24/7:** Moved Roger Duxfield/Rachael Dean: That the Budget and Cashflow Forecast Financial Statement to 30 June 2020, provided in the Board Meeting pack are approved. CARRIED

**Motion 24/8:** Moved Roger Duxfield/Rachael Dean: It was recommended that the 2019-2020 SPE final draft be circulated through Council for approval then follow the process for Ministerial approval as outlined by Rod Treder. CARRIED

**Motion 24/9:** Moved Don Hammond/Stephen Hall: That the previously circulated GAC Financial Management and Reporting recommendations (as amended 5 June 2019) and the Financial Delegations Policy (as amended and approved by email) be formally approved. CARRIED

**11. Correspondence:** The correspondence list was circulated.

**Motion 24/10:** Moved Don Hammond/Stephen Hall: That inward correspondence be accepted, and outward correspondence be approved. CARRIED

**12.DOC Governance Matters:** Rod Treder reported on governance issues. The Annual Report and Statement of Performance Expectations are being developed. The DOC response to the Chamois OIA was noted.

**13.Hunting Permits Online:** Mark Beardsley, DOC, provided an update covering open area hunting permits information - a website-based application which enables hunters to request permits. At present approximately 58,000 permits are completed online. Launched in 2010, it was expected to have a limited lifespan and has lost some functionality due to some components no longer being supported. It is due for replacement and DOC have started a project to refresh the entire hunting permit system within the next 12 months.

Roger Duxfield, Carol Watson and Sharon Salmons will work with DOC on the development of the new system. Geoff Kerr reiterated that the permit is not a hunting permit but is about having permission to carry and discharge a firearm – there is misconception around this which causes compliance complications. The GAC offered its assistance to help make the new system as user friendly and fit for purpose as possible.

**14. Deer management on public land:** Amber Bill, DOC, spoke about DOC developing a national approach to deer management. Amber Bill covered the Minister's Letter of Expectation to the GAC, engagement with Treaty partners, vegetation data analysis on palatable species, the importance of the health of the forest. She is to provide her project plan to the Minister in the next couple weeks and plans to have a hui in early 2020. A possible outcome of which could be the establishment of a Reference Group to work through the issues.

It was noted that the GAC Act states that deer, chamois, tahr and pigs are not pests but a resource to be managed and it is important DOC use the correct terminology. The GAC expects to be fully involved in this process and hunting is the only tool for managing deer numbers. Garry Ottmann and Geoff Kerr will work with Amber Bill and Rod Treder to give some historical context and develop GAC's involvement in the process **Action item 24/4**. Don Hammond asked that Amber Bill convey to the Minister that the GAC is very committed to the process and providing support and assistance where needed.

**15.Discussion about deer repellent:** The GAC is working with DOC and NZDA to assess options for the best outcome for hunters. Communication is key to a good outcome and for all parties to work together to find solutions for this year (there is no mast event expected next year). Rod Treder advised that the issue is the longevity of current product. **Action item 24/5** continue this conversation at the next GAC Meeting and make recommendations for the use of deer repellent.

**16.Sika show arrangements:** Councillors to liaise with Garry Ottmann & Jenny Wotten about their attendance and any requirements.

**17.Ministerial Liaison & Strategic Relationships:** Don Hammond spoke positively about the strengthening relationship and our engagement with DOC. Continuing our discussions with various senior personnel in DOC such as Amber Bill, Ben Reddiex, James Holborow and Mark Beardsley, is key to progressing the GAC's mandate for ensuring the quality of game animal herds while remaining consistent with conservation values.

**18.Meeting planning:** The next meeting will be held on 4 November 2019. Dates to the end of 2020 were confirmed.

**19.Update on General Manager's position:** the position has been advertised and applications close on 30 August 2019. At the time of this meeting, 10 applications have been received. The sub-committee

to conduct shortlisting and interviews is: Don Hammond, Rachael Dean, Roger Duxfield and Sharon Salmons.

**20.General Business:** we had some feedback on the online Bowhunting course which has been dealt with. The course has been designed in the US and made available for use in NZ – and wording to this effect will be made clearer. Our work on our hunter education and safety plan will address the issue of availability of NZ content.

The sale of Sambar deer as pet food has been raised. Garry Ottmann to investigate further.

Roger Duxfield updated Councillors on the current status of the firearms buy back process, upcoming proposed changes to legislation and a proposal to create a new statutory body to advise the police on these matters. Hunters should be reminded to make personal submissions if they perceive the proposed changes are impractical for hunters and ammunition. **Action item 24/6** Garry Ottmann to prepare a submission and provide some pointers for others to follow.

Rachael Dean noted the proposed changes to firearms legislation could adversely affect shooting ranges, and deerstalker's club's ranges. If the changes go ahead then shooters may lose the safe place to sight in their firearms and practice their shooting. The GAC will include a comment about this in its submission.

Garry Ottmann and Hayden Cox reported on an upcoming collaboration with Fish & Game as the other statutory organisation managing hunters, involving a workshop to which representatives of stakeholder's organisations will be invited to discuss the implications of the next tranche of proposed changes to firearms legislation. The GAC will seek to have the opportunity to present its views directly to the Select Committee, since as a statutory body we have a clear mandate from the government to promote safety initiatives for the hunting sector, including firearms safety and to raise awareness of the views of the hunting sector.

Hayden Cox outlined proposals around raising awareness of the conservation work hunters do especially with Birds such as Kea, Kiwi and Whio. The NZ Falcon as a fellow hunter is also of keen interest to the hunting sector.

Steve McFall sought permission to be the GAC representative to the Animal Behaviour and Welfare Consultative Committee and attend their biannual meeting – approved.

Next meeting 4 November 2019.

Meeting closed 4.28pm.