

MINUTES, GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING — HELD AT NORTH CANTERBURY FISH & GAME OFFICE, HAREWOOD, CHRISTCHURCH - 9AM, 16 JUNE 2023

Council Members present: Grant Dodson (Chair), Steve McFall, Bruce Warburton, Eugene Rewi, Kevin, Eastwood, Peter Swann, John Cook, Sharon Salmons (via Zoom).

Also in attendance: Tim Gale (General Manager), Jenny Wotten (Executive Officer), Kaylyn Pinney (Policy Advisor), Hayden Cox (Communications).

Part attendance: Rasmus Gabrielsson (Chief Executive – North Canterbury Fish & Game Council), Harry Graham Samson, Matt Garrick and Lyndon Slater all from Fish & Game attended for part of the meeting. Mike Perry, Pete Thomas, Liam Garlick & Tom Brookman all from DOC, attended for part of the meeting. Garry Ottmann & Geoff Kerr attended and presented for part of the meeting. Duane Peltzer and Graham Nugent, joined the meeting at 11.15am to present agenda item 15. Erin Garrick attended for Agenda item 19.

Apologies: Minister Willow-Jean Prime, Tui Keenan

- 1. Welcome, Apologies, Karakia:** Chair Grant Dodson welcomed Councillors, staff and contractors. DOC staff will join us today for various agenda items. Councillor Eugene Rewi opened the meeting with a karakia. Chairman Grant Dodson noted that Councillor Sharon Salmons was joining the meeting today via zoom.

Motion 44/1: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: that apologies are received.

CARRIED

- 2. Chairman's Welcome:** The Chair welcomed Councillors, staff, contractors and visitors. Grant Dodson commended the management team on putting together the meeting pack and statutory documentation. Council is on track to meet key statutory deadlines.
- 3. Environmental scan – 'Environment scan' identification of key matters -** Wide ranging discussion about regional and topical issues. Council is liaising collaboratively with the DOC leadership team, the Wild Animal Management Team and other stakeholders in regard to its statutory functions. Discussion about Te Ara ki Mua, iwi and stakeholders, Herds of Special Interest progress, Wild Animal Recovery Operations (WARO) systems analysis, game animal management, various hunting areas including Stewart Island, the DOC permit system process and ballots, firearms licence waiting times, the distances that Licencing Officers need to travel to interview firearms licence applicants, Sodium Fluoroacetate toxin oversight and data, research, tahr, hunting competitions, the work of the Sika Foundation, meat donations, volunteer week, hunter education, pigs and kauri dieback, amongst other issues. Several key points to be raised with DOC later in the meeting. The hunting sector continues to demonstrate the value of collaborating on essential elements of game animal management.
- 4. Confirm the agenda:** the agenda was discussed and confirmed.

Motion 44/2: Moved Peter Swann/John Cook: That the revised agenda is confirmed.

CARRIED

5. Conflict of Interest Register: Councillors were reminded of the requirement to disclose any new conflicts of interest. Advice of conflicts provided out of session have been incorporated in the updated register.

Motion 44/3: Moved Grant Dodson/Pete Swann: That the updated Conflict of Interest Register is received and noted. CARRIED

6. Risk Register Review: Management has reviewed the Risk Register and incorporated minor changes as approved at the February 2023 Meeting. Councillors provided further minor amendments.

Motion 44/4: Moved Steve McFall/Kevin Eastwood: That the updated Risk Management Register is received and approved. CARRIED

7. Standing items - Electronic approval of Submissions & correspondence received outside of Meetings. Council Discussion about documents finalised and approved between meetings.

Motion 44/5: Moved Bruce Warburton/Eugene Rewi: Council ratifies the acceptance of submissions & correspondence circulated & electronically approved by Councillors between meetings. CARRIED

8. Minutes of previous meeting 4 May 2023: were taken as read, minor wording adjustment page 5.

Motion 44/6: Moved Steve McFall/Bruce Warburton: That the Minutes of the 4 May 2023 Meeting be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting. CARRIED

9. Action items carried forward from 4 May 2023 Meeting and matters arising: Discussion about action items arising and status of each item.

10. Financial Reporting: Councillors were provided with the Financial Performance Executive Summary to 31 March 2023. Tim Gale spoke to the Financial Reporting and Variances Report, documenting income and expenditure versus annual budgeted figures for 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. Overall, the forecast is to spend \$749,975 within the financial year, which is \$33,475 less than forecast in the SPE.

The forecast to June 30, 2023, now shows an expected budget deficit of \$72,325 which is \$38,225 down on SPE full year, creating the trend for an end of year surplus to carry over as reserves or towards 2024 budget. Councillors were also provided with the Profit and Loss Report for 1 July 2022 to 30 April 2023 and the Balance Sheet to 30 April 2023. The cashflow position is in line with the SPE 2022-23.

ACTION: Tim Gale to email Council to provide summary of overspends, underspends and transfers between categories.

Motion 44/7: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: That Council receives and notes the Financial Performance Executive Summary, Financial Reporting and Variances Report to 31 March 2023, Profit and Loss Report to 30 April 2023 and Cashflow Report to 30 April 2023. CARRIED

11. Letter of Expectations: The 2023-24 Letter of Expectations was received from Minister Prime on 16 May 2023. Councillors confirmed that the Minister's priorities have been taken into consideration in

the further drafting of the Statement of Performance Expectations (SPE) 2023-24 and 2023-24 Work Plan and incorporated into both documents.

Motion 44/8: Moved Eugene Rewi/Bruce Warburton: That Council notes the receipt of the Minister's Letter of Expectations 2023-24. CARRIED

12. Draft Statement of Performance Expectations 2023-24: The draft Statement of Performance Expectations 2023-24, was provided to the Minister on 30 April 2023. The Minister provided comments on the draft on 16 May 2023. Council has considered the Minister's comments and amended the SPE, which will be sent back to the Minister as a final & signed document before the start of the financial year.

Motion 44/9: Moved Peter Swann/Bruce Warburton: That Council receives and approves the amended draft Statement of Performance Expectations 2023-24 and the Forecast Financial Statements for the financial year ending 30 June 2024, contained therein, noting a few format changes as discussed. CARRIED

13. Draft Work Plan 2023-24: At the 4 May 2023 Council Meeting, it was noted that the draft Work Plan would be presented for discussion and approval at the June 2023 meeting. Council discussion about the draft Work Plan priorities, provision of advice to the Minister, liaison with DOC, liaison with stakeholders, Te Ara ki mua, Wildlife Act Review, Māori & iwi liaison, research, tahr, current staffing situation, progressing our Letter of Expectations, funding. Grant Dodson commended Tim Gale on the development of the 2023-24 Work Plan. Councillors agreed on pursuing a strategic partnership with the National Deer Association of the United States of America.

Motion 44/10: Moved Grant Dodson/Bruce Warburton: That Council receives and approves the draft Work Plan 2023-24 v1.0. CARRIED

14. Duane Peltzer (in person) and Graham Nugent (via Zoom) – Ungulates and Carbon Research: Grant Dodson introduced Duane Peltzer (Principal Scientist, Ecosystem Ecology) and Graham Nugent (Researcher), who addressed Council in relation to their research (and report) on Ungulates and Carbon. Presentation followed by discussion. Grant Dodson & Tim Gale thanked Duane Peltzer and Graham Nugent for their presentation.

15. Tahr Management in Management Unit 1 (MU1) - Programme Update: Garry Ottmann & Geoff Kerr presented to Council, providing an update on the Tahr Management Unit 1 programme. Tom Brookman from DOC also attended and took part in the discussion that followed the presentation. Tim Gale and Grant Dodson thanked Garry Ottmann & Geoff Kerr for their work and representing the Council on this forum. Grant also thanked Tom Brookman and the Establishment Team and Steering Group for their ongoing commitment.

Bruce Warburton was asked and agreed to remain on the MU1 Steering Group after he retires from Council, and for him to be compensated for his time and any expenses.

Motion 44/11: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: That Bruce Warburton remains as a GAC representative on the Tahr Management MU1 Steering group. CARRIED

16. DOC Wild Animal Manager Mike Perry: Grant Dodson introduced Mike Perry to speak to Council about Wild Animal Management. The Wild Animal Management team is relatively new in DOC and is responsible for implementing and managing wild animal management on Public Conservation Land. The purpose of the Wild Animals National Programme is to implement Te Ara ki Mua which has identified the following objectives:

- Browsing pressure is reduced where necessary to enhance biodiversity, support ecosystem resilience, and improve the quality of game animals.
- Efforts are coordinated and capacity is enhanced across the people, organisations, and agencies involved in wild animal management.
- An effective system for wild animal management is the foundation for collective action.

Presentation followed by discussion about wild animal management, and need to understand how the various Acts interact with each other (Game Animal Council Act 2013, Wild Animal Council Act 1977, Biosecurity Act 1993, Deer Control Policy 2001, National Pest Control Plans etc) and what monitoring and evaluation systems (and case studies) are available. Discussion also touched on successful initiatives such as the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation and Sika Foundation programmes. At the end of July, DOC will be launching a new National Wild Goat Hunting Competition, to be run as a nationwide competition from 1 August to 26 November.

Grant Dodson raised several questions with DOC, that had arisen earlier in the day: regarding the Environmental Defence Society paper, the number of GAC representatives in the Te Ara ki Mua (Wild Animals National Coordination Group) forum, hunter access to conservation land, status of the DOC Hunting Permit upgrade, firearms regulations changes, et al.

Grant Dodson thanked Mike Perry for his presentation and the ongoing constructive liaison between both organisations. The GAC expects to have a role in the further development of regional and national collaborative plans as per their statutory functions, Te Ara ki Mua and the Biodiversity Strategy. Mike Perry offered to present to the Council again in the future on any topic the GAC wants to hear more about with it being agreed DOC will have a standing agenda item at every second Council meeting (2 or 3) times a year to provide updates, on Te Ara ki Mua and other programmes. This is important to ensure Council are informed on operational plans in order to inform policy, risk and governance. It will also provide an opportunity to communicate key issues to the DOC.

17. Draft Budget 2023-24: At the 4 May 2023 Council Meeting, Councillors received and noted a draft 2023-24 Budget. It was agreed that the final Budget would be presented for approval at the Council Meeting in June 2023. The Minister of Conservation has confirmed the GAC's funding allocation of \$800,000 for 2023-24. The GAC also has additional funding of \$70,000 through Jobs for Nature. The draft budget 2023-24 was presented to Council for approval.

Motion 44/12: Moved Peter Swann/Eugene Rewi: That Council receives and approves the draft Budget 2023-24. CARRIED

18. General Manager's Report: Tim Gale spoke to his report highlighting:

- Te Ara ki Mua – Wild Animal Management Coordination Group Meeting 26 June 2023– GAC to attend.

- External engagements
- Funding Stewardship and accountability
- The Herds of Special Interest (HOSI) process
- Hunter Safety & Education Programme (Better Hunting)
- Whakatipu white-tailed deer and Dart/Caples 1080 operation
- Rakaia Red Deer Research and Management
- Submission - Conservation of wildlife in Aotearoa New Zealand – GAC feedback in response to the draft ‘Reform of the Wildlife Act 1953’, May 2023
- Research 1 - Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research Crown Research Institute analysis of peer reviewed literature on ungulates and carbon
- Research 2 - current context on deer meat recovery associated with deer management activity.
- Wild Animal Recovery Operations (WARO) problem identification
- Stewart Island survey - what white-tailed deer on Stewart Island/Rakiura means to the NZ hunting community.
- ICT Review
- Review of Councillor’s per diems
- Recent risks and opportunities to the Council, hunting and game animals.
- Letter to NZ Police - closing down of ranges as a result of changes to the firearms regulations.
- Proposed online discussion between the GAC and NZ Police (Firearms Safety Registry) on 20 June 2023, starting at 7pm.

<p>Motion 44/12: Moved Grant Dodson/John Cook: That Council receives and notes the June 2023 General Manager’s Report.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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19. Farewell to Councillors Bruce Warburton and Erin Garrick: Grant Dodson thanked both Councillors for their contributions. Grant Dodson appreciated Erin Garrick’s contributions to the Council with her strong science base all while juggling the demands of motherhood. Grant Dodson also commended Bruce Warburton on his contribution to Council, strong science base, and connections to mana whenua. Grant Dodson moved a vote of thanks to both retiring Councillors.

20. Meeting Planning: Councillors were provided with a list of meeting dates for 2024; 23 February, 10 May, 20 June, and 21 & 22 November. An August 2024 meeting date is yet to be agreed upon.

21. General Business:

- Animal Welfare & Behavioural Consultative Meeting to be held in Christchurch on 25 October; GAC to be represented. Last meeting was in March 2023 and Steve McFall represented the GAC.
- Communications Report
- Governance Training – scheduled for the November 2023 Meeting.

Grant thanked Fish & Game North Canterbury for the use of the meeting venue and the ongoing collaborative relationship between both organisations.

Meeting Review: Bruce Warburton has enjoyed this opportunity to make a positive difference in this for game animal management and conservation. He provided feedback on how the Council performed during this meeting, with the following reflections:

- He thinks it is appropriate for staff to be part of the environmental scan as they have a lot to contribute to the discussion and follow up on issues that are raised.
- The meeting packs and focus has evolved a lot since his first meeting when most of the discussion was focussed on funding.
- He supports the need for Councillors to focus on governance rather than operations.
- He suggests that Council has a separate meeting focussed on all issues to deal with 'access' as it continues to be the major impediment to recreational hunting.
- He supports the increase in guest presenters & visitors at GAC Meetings.
- He suggests that Council continues to hear about research and science that supports evidence-based management strategies (and suggests inviting plant ecologists to attend future meetings).

Eugene Rewi closed the meeting with a karakia.

Meeting closed at 4pm.