

MINUTES, GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING, 9 MAY 2024 - CHRISTCHURCH

Council Members present: Grant Dodson (Chair), Steve McFall, Eugene Rewi (Teams), John Cook, Melissa Jackson (Teams), Peter Swann, Kevin Eastwood, Callum Sheridan and Andrew Simpson.

Also in attendance: Tim Gale (General Manager) Kaylyn Pinney (Policy Advisor), Hayden Cox (GAC Comms), Larry Blair (Hunter Safety and Education Programme Lead), Jenny Wotten (Executive Administrator).

Part attendance: Tui Keenan (Teams and then in person), Ben Reddiex (DOC), David Martin (NZ Police).

1. **Welcome, Apologies, Karakia:** Karakia to start the meeting – Jenny Wotten. Apologies received from Sharon Salmons.

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| Motion 48/1: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: That apologies are accepted. | CARRIED |
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2. **Chairman’s Welcome & Chairman’s Report:** Grant Dodson welcomed Councillors, staff, contractors and visitors to the meeting.

3. **Confirm the Agenda:** the agenda was discussed and confirmed. It was noted that the Ten-Year Anniversary Event and GAC Representations were to be discussed during General Business.

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| Motion 48/2: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: That the revised agenda is confirmed. | CARRIED |
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4. **Minister’s Address:** Hon Todd McClay, Minister for Hunting and Fishing addressed Council via Teams touching briefly on current issues including recreational hunter’s access to DOC managed land, valued introduced species, HOSI and managed herds, game animal management, GAC engagement with stakeholders and DOC, MPI work on wallabies, meat recovery, research, wapiti, legislation.

Grant Dodson requested that the GAC be able to see a copy of the Department’s Briefing to the Minister on HOSI, to use the information as a base line for developing our proposals, criteria and cost estimates. The Minister acknowledged the request and noted that the Briefing is still under consideration – he will ask the Department to talk to Council about what can be shared.

5. **Update on the Wild Animal Management Programme, Ben Reddiex DOC:** Ben Reddiex shared his presentation and spoke to the slides.

Entity Specific expectations from LOE and Performance measures and targets: diagram showing linkage between entity specific LOE and SPE. Developed by DOC Governance.

National Coordination Group:

- Next meeting is on 19 June 2024.
- A workplan has been drafted, sub-groups are progressing work on Māori engagement, prioritisation, access, communications, and research.

Russell Forest Sika Eradication: Sika were illegally released in Russell Forest in 1989 and are now over 400 km from the gazetted sika feral range in the Central North Island. While control by DOC since 1990 has kept numbers low, sufficient resources had not previously been

available to completely remove them. Funding from Budget 22 to prevent further expansion of the deer feral range has now provided resources to achieve eradication. DOC appreciates GAC messaging about keeping animals within the places where they are supposed to be.

Ruahine Adaptive Deer Management:

- Ben Reddiex thanked Geoff Kerr & Garry Ottmann for their previous work on the Ruahines.
- DOC team working on Treaty partner engagement.
- NZDA recreational hunting project to take place this week (with a weather back-up).
- Collecting tracklogs & kill way points.
- Exploring option to recover meat with local marae.
- Hunt data will be used to inform deer management plan

Tahr Population Monitoring – Fact Sheet:

- Ben Reddiex acknowledged GAC representation around Tahr during the time he has been involved.
- Aerial surveys carried out over recent years to estimate density and abundance of Himalayan tahr on PCL.
- Recent report published on DOC website 29 April 2024.
- With input from GAC scientific reports made more accessible and understandable using plain English factsheet.

Recreational Hunting Permit Initiative – background:

The Minister is very keen to get improved access for hunters and fishers, as alluded to today.

Context on the current hunting permit system was covered, including:

- Up to 58,000 hunting permits issued annually to approximately 33,000 hunters.
- 30,000+ hours of DOC staff invested in managing these permits.
- The rules and processes for issuing these permits differ throughout the country as well as the systems and tools used.
- 44,000 are Open Area Hunting Permits
- These systems are a range of tools from old databases, applications, and even carbon copy books.
- Modern applications and a coordinated approach is required.

The Department is improving it's open hunting permit system now and trialling one restricted hunting permit (Rakiura). Close engagement with GAC and NZDA, and local hunters (for Rakiura) will continue.

National Wild Goat Hunting Competition:

- Ben Reddiex thanked Callum Sheridan & the NZDA for their involvement in 2023.
- Over 10,000 wild goats removed last year.
- Entrants reported they were more likely to hunt wild goats because of the competition, and entering for conservation came in as a top 4 reason for entering.
- This year they are aiming for more involvement from private landowners, iwi and Maori organisations.
- Around 700 hunters entered last year. Can the GAC help to gain more?
- The competition has not been formally announced for 2024 yet – but planning is well underway.

Management of wild animals:

- Discussion held around herd management, noting a range of considerations required for herd management (from goals and objectives being clear, through to monitoring programmes depending on those goals/objectives, and the need for deliberate management).
 - Used Sika Foundation example to emphasise some of these aspects.
- Discussion on 'How do we optimise wild animal management with this context and the toolbox available'. and the role that various entities play in how this is communicated.

6. Council Only Session - Environmental Scan:

Motion 48/3: Moved Steve McFall/John Cook: That Council moves into committee. CARRIED

Motion 48/4: Steve McFall/Andrew Simpson: That Council moves out of committee. CARRIED

- 7. Conflicts of Interest:** Councillors were reminded of the requirement to declare any new conflicts of interest. Code of Conduct is being rewritten and conflicts of interest will be fleshed out more in that document.

Motion 48/5: Moved Kevin Eastwood/Peter Swann: That the updated Conflict of Interest Register is received and noted. CARRIED

- 8. Conflicts of interest:** Councillors were reminded of the requirement to declare any conflicts of interests with the meeting agenda items. John Cook declared a conflict with agenda item 12: HOSI. It was confirmed that John Cook would be involved in the discussion but leave the room if there is a vote or any decision making.

Motion 48/6: Moved Kevin Eastwood/Peter Swann: That Conflict of Interest with meeting agenda items are noted. CARRIED

- 9. Minutes of Previous Meeting 22 and 23 February 2024:** were taken as read with minor changes. Matters arising: Steve McFall requested an update on whether DOC has provided the GAC with a copy of their HOSI BIM to the Minister re HOSI.

Motion 48/7: Moved Andrew Simpson/Eugene Rewi: That the Minutes of the 22 and 23 February 2024 meeting be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting. CARRIED

- 10. Minister for Hunting and Fishing 2024-25 Letter of Expectations:** Grant Dodson received the 2024-25 Letter of Expectations from the Minister for Hunting and Fishing on 8 March 2024. This was circulated to Councillors 8 March 2024 and all Councillors acknowledged they had received it and read it.

Councillors considered expectations and considerations outlined in the annual 2024-25 Letter of Expectations from the Minister. Feedback to DOC that the GAC thinks the process has improved.

11. Setting the Strategic Direction for 2024-25:

Draft Statement of Performance Expectations 2024-25 (incorporating Forecast Financial Statements for the financial year ending 30 June 2025)

The draft Statement of Performance Expectations (SPE) reflects the GAC outcome classes, operational areas of focus, performance targets and measures and forecast financial information for the 2024-2025 financial year. A draft was circulated to Councillors for 'approval in principle' on 26 April 2024. Comments from Councillors were incorporated in the unsigned draft Statement of Performance Expectations 2024-25 provided to the Minister for Hunting and Fishing on 29 April 2024 and presented to Council at this meeting (9 May 2024) for further discussion. The Minister for Hunting and Fishing has 15 days to consider the draft and respond (by 17 May 2024). As soon as practical after receiving the Minister's comments, the revised SPE must be provided to the Minister before the start of the new financial year.

Councillors received and considered the draft Statement of Performance Expectations 2024-25 (including Forecast Financial Statements).

It is anticipated that the final Statement of Performance Expectations 2024-25, Forecast Financial Statements, Work Plan 2024-25 and Budget will be finalised in the next couple weeks and approved at the online Council Meeting on 20 June 2024. Councillor Andrew Simpson feels there is still room for improvement aligning the strategic plan to the workplan and the budget and he would like the Council to keep working towards this in future years. It was noted that Council used to provide financial reporting to this level but the then Council thought it was unnecessary.

Draft Work Plan 2024-25 v1

The draft Work Plan was provided for Council consideration. The performance measures, activities, and targets outlined in the Statement of Performance Expectations (SPE) 2024-25 form a substantial component of the Work Plan.

Councillors received and considered the Draft Work Plan 2024-25 v1.

Draft Budget 2024-25 v1 – Councillor only session.

All crown entities and Public Finance Act 1989 schedule 4 and 4A entities must prepare budgets for the coming financial year and comparative actual figures from the previous financial year and the budget must be approved before the start of the new financial year.

It was noted that the Jobs for Nature funding for the Hunter Education and Safety role would be ceasing at the end of the 2023-24 financial year.

The Minister for Hunting and Fishing has confirmed Council funding for 2024-25 will be \$1M, increasing to \$1.2M for the 2025-26 financial year.

Discussion about the number of face-to-face Council meetings, attendance at events, reserves policy, Parliamentary Hunt. Minor changes were proposed to be followed up by Tim Gale.

Councillors received and considered the Draft Budget 2024-25 v1.

Motion 48/8: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: that Council approves and adopts the draft SPE 2024-25, Workplan 2024-25 and Budget 2024-25 – amendments as discussed to be incorporated and presented again following receipt of Minister’s comments on Draft SPE, at the 20 June 2024 meeting. CARRIED

12. Herds of Special Interest (HOSI):

Council Paper 48/CP02 HOSI Proposal Evaluation Part A – Idea document

Councillors received a framework for assessing HOSI proposals, for consideration, Council Paper 48/CP02. Part A deals with submissions and the implementation of a robust process for approving Council support for full HOSI proposal development, as part of the draft best practice HOSI designation process.

Completion of the HOSI template Part A provides enough information for a preliminary assessment of a proposals likelihood for facilitating Subpart 3, section 16 (1)(a)(i) the animals are of special interest to hunters and - (ii) the animals can be managed for hunting purposes, according to the Council.

Council received and provided feedback on the HOSI Proposal Evaluation for Part A: HOSI Idea document. Minor changes to the wording to be made. Councillors to provide additional feedback by email after the meeting.

Motion 48/9: Moved Steve McFall/Kevin Eastwood: Noting the proposed minor wording changes, Council approved piloting the HOSI Proposal Evaluation for Part A: HOSI Idea with amendments according to recommendation 1, if any. CARRIED

Appointment of Councillors to HOSI Evaluation Sub Committee for CNISF HOSI application:

- Melissa Jackson
- Andrew Simpson
- Callum Sheridan
- Peter Swann

Chair Grant Dodson will act as Moderator in the CNISF HOSI application evaluation during the moderation part of the evaluation.

The CNISF HOSI application Evaluation Sub Committee results and feedback are to be reported to Council at either the 20 June 2024 or 2 August 2024 Council Meeting.

Council Paper 48/CP03 HOSI Policy Part 1 and 2

The preliminary assessment of the prerequisites for HOSI is supported by the Herds of Special Interest Assessment Criteria Policy – Part 1 & 2, provided in Council Paper 48/CP03.

The purpose of Council Paper 48/CP03 is to provide criteria that enables Game Animal Council HOSI Proposal evaluations, and supports the Minister when considering Subpart 3, section 16(1)(a)(i) and (ii) of the Game Animal Council Act 2013, and those listed under 16(2), including (b) the Council, when providing advice to the Minister on whether a species of game animal is of special interest to hunters and can be managed for hunting purposes.

HOSI Assessment Criteria Policy Part 1 and 2

The purpose of the HOSI Assessment Criteria Policy Part 1 and 2 is to provide criteria that enables Game Animal Council HOSI proposal evaluations, and supports the Minister for Hunting and Fishing when considering Subpart 3, section 16(1)(a)(i) and (ii) of the Game Animal Council Act 2013, and supports those listed under 16(2), including (b) the Council, when providing advice to the Minister on whether a species of game animal is of special interest to hunters and can be managed for hunting purposes.

There are a range of legislative prerequisites under the Game Animal Council Act 2013 that must be met if the Minister for Hunting and Fishing (the Minister) determines to designate a "Herd of Special Interest" (HOSI). These include, but are not limited to, Subpart 3, section 16 (1) - the Minister may, by notice, designate any species of game animal in a specified area on public conservation land to be a herd of special interest, if - (a) the Minister considers that - (i) the animals are of special interest to hunters, and - (ii) the animals can be managed for hunting purposes.

The GAC Act 2013 does not define nor outline criteria to support consideration by the Minister. Rather, section 16(2) requires the Minister to have regard to advice of specific organisations / individuals, including (b) the Council, when determining whether a species of game animal is of special interest to hunters and can be managed for hunting purposes.

Council discussed at length the approach being taken to articulate NZGAC's policy relating to the criteria for HOSI designations. Andrew Simpson was concerned that the proposed policy addresses only the "special interest" and "can be managed" criteria and not other criteria that the Act requires for designation. Kaylyn Pinney explained that the proposed approach conforms with what had been discussed with DOC and its advisors over the past two years and that the other criteria would be addressed in subsequent policies that will be developed as the process proceeds. The meeting agreed that the proposed Policy should be amended to make clear: (i) there are other criteria that apply to decisions on designation; (ii) further GAC policies will explain GAC's approach to those other criteria; and (iii) the timeline for publication of those further GAC policies.

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| <p>Motion 48/10: Moved Andrew Simpson/Grant Dodson: Council received and approved HOSI Assessment Criteria Policy - Part 1&2, subject to the proposed amendment to include the additional parts to be added and insert the Project Pathway.</p> | <p>CARRIED</p> |
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13. General Manager's Report: Tim Gale presented his General Manager's Report covering:

- The impact the GAC is having across the hunting sector.
- Meeting the Statement of Performance Expectations 2023-24 Targets.
- Te Ara ki Mua
- External engagements
- Unlawful hunting work
- Visitor Firearms Licence
- Firearms Licencing
- GAC Submissions during Q3, 2023-24.
- Tahr Management

- Understanding Tahr Abundance
- Tahr Management in Management Unit 1 (MU1)
- Aerial 1080 operations
- Herds of Special Interest (HOSI)
- Research - Game animal hunting in New Zealand: per capita effort, harvest and expenditure
- Wakatipu white tailed deer
- Recruitment for Communications Advisor
- Official Information Act (OIA) Requests
- Foreseeable risks

Tim Gale thanked staff for their hard work since the last meeting, achieving targets, attending external engagements, liaising with stakeholders including some schools, Tahr Population monitoring targets, working with DOC, the new Communications Advisor staff member and the recent OIA request.

ACTION: Tim Gale to write to the Department re use of deer repellent and liaising with the GAC on its application.

Motion 48/11: Moved John Cook/Peter Swann: That Council receives and notes the General Manager's Report – May 2024. CARRIED

14. Financial Reporting & Variances: Tim Gale presented to Council on the financial performance and position of Council for the 2023-24 financial year and income and expenditure versus budget for the period 1 July 2023 to 31 March 2024. Grant Dodson acknowledged Tim Gale for his good work putting together a clear and concise Variances Report.

Motion 48/12: Moved Eugene Rewi/Melissa Jackson: That Council (1) receives and notes the Financial Reporting & Variances Report for the period 1 July 2023 to 31 March 2024 (Profit and Loss Report for the 3 months ended 31 March 2024 & Balance Sheet at 31 March 2024); and (2) in line with the Delegations Policy, section 4.5.2, the Council to consider and approve the additional expenditure (Note 1); and (3) approves the changes to section 4.5.2 of the Council's Financial Delegations Policy as outlined in the Report; and (3) approves the reallocation of \$4,000 from Promoting management of game animals through regional hunting competitions to Technical Services; and (4) approves the reallocation of \$10,000 from Legal Fees to Technical Services. CARRIED

15. NZGAC Quarterly Performance Report – Q3 2023-24: Tim Gale reported that the GAC is making strong progress to meet the Statement of Performance Expectations 2023-24 (SPE) performance measures and associated targets. Quarter 3 marked significant achievements for the Game Animal Council (GAC) across various fronts, showcasing a commitment to improving the management of game animals, promoting safety, and advancing education within New Zealand.

Reporting against the SPE Performance Measures and Targets we have achieved 16/28 performance targets outlined in the Statement Performance Expectations 2023-24. The Council is on track to achieve the majority of the other targets in Q4. The Quarterly Report was provided to the Department on 30 April 2024 and is provided in the Meeting Pack for Councillor's information. A Statement of Performance outlining achievement/non-

achievement of all targets will be presented in the 2023-24 Annual Report. Input of external consultant was acknowledged, good value for money, good processes in place.

Motion 48/13: Moved Grant Dodson/Peter Swann: That Council receives the NZGAC Quarterly Performance Report – Q3 2023-24 and notes the contents of the Report. CARRIED

16. NZ Police address to Council: David Martin, Manager Rural Policing, Police National Headquarters, introduced himself and addressed Council on the issues of Unlawful Hunting, Firearms revocation, partnerships and rural crime. This was followed by questions from Councillors and staff with mention of the Unlawful Hunting Workshop convened by the GAC in Southland. Grant Dodson thanked David Martin for his presentation. The GAC is happy to provide support and engage again soon with David Martin, Mike McIlraith and the Firearms Safety Authority.

17. Risk Management Register Review: Management has reviewed the Risk Register and made changes to the level of risk in some categories as there were inconsistencies in calculation of Level/Likelihood of Risks. Additional amendment – include a sentence: Council to continue seeking alternative funding streams to diversify our funding base and reduce reliance on government appropriation.

Motion 48/14: Moved John Cook/Tui Keenan: That Council receives and notes the updated Risk Register and approves the minor changes. CARRIED

18. Action items and matters arising: Councillors considered the list of action items and progress made against each. Te Kahui subcommittee Terms of Reference is a work in progress.

19. Communications: Council was provided with a snapshot of the GAC's external communications activities since the last update. Taken as read. Tim Gale thanked Hayden Cox for the service he has provided to the Council over a long period of time and presented him with a gift. Hayden reflected on his time with Council before and after the legislation was enacted.

Motion 48/15: Moved Tui Keenan/Kevin Eastwood: That Council receives and notes the communications update. CARRIED

20. Standing items – Electronic approval of submissions & correspondence received outside of meetings: Council discussion about documents finalised and approved between meetings. Grant Dodson followed up with Rick McGovern-Wilson already and will send a new reminder shortly. Councillors noted the content of the Submission on the Fast-Track Approvals Bill.

21. General Business:

Ten Year Anniversary Event

The Game Animal Council Act 2013 received Royal assent on 27 November 2013, and the Council was formed in 2014. The GAC is now 10 years old. Over the past year or so, holding a Ten-Year Anniversary Event has been discussed by the Council. It has now been confirmed the event will be held on 1 August 2024. Council received and noted the update and the matters yet to be resolved.

GAC Representations internal and external

Councillors were provided with a list of current and long-standing GAC representatives (internal and external). The GAC has previously approved current and ex-Councillors to represent the Council at various meetings and forums, internal and external. The next AWNA Meeting is to be held in September 2024.

Steve McFall will continue to attend AWNA meetings as the GAC's pig hunter representative for the North Island.

ACTION: Follow up whether the NZ Royal Society Funded Marsden Research Project went ahead.

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| <p>Motion 48/16: Moved Andrew Simpson/Peter Swann: Council reconfirmed the current and longstanding GAC representatives (internal and external) and that these representatives be confirmed for now and for the coming year.</p> | <p>CARRIED</p> |
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ACTION: Grant Dodson to write to DOC to ask about the designated feral ranges for each of the deer species, when they were last reviewed, if ever. And how much does DOC spend on deer control? The designated feral range for tahr is in the Tahr Plan.

Discussion about other possible upcoming Council expenses and prioritising use of limited funds in line with GAC legislative mandate and statutory functions.

Grant Dodson congratulated Kaylyn Pinney for completing her PhD. Tomorrow she will become Dr Kaylyn Pinney.

Grant Dodson made a presentation to Councillor Steve McFall who is retiring from Council on 30 June, with a gift to mark his many years of service.

22. Meeting Review & close: Councillor Steve McFall provided feedback on how the Council had performed over the day & a half meeting. Steve McFall said it was pleasing to see that Councillors stayed in governance mode and stayed on track.

Grant Dodson acknowledged Fish and Game North Canterbury for the use of their meeting room. Karakia to close the meeting – Jenny Wotten. Meeting closed at 4.19pm.

Next Meeting is on 20 June 2024.