

MINUTES, GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING, 2 AUGUST 2024 – DEERSTALKERS HOUSE, WELLINGTON

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

Also in attendance: Tim Gale (General Manager) Dr Kaylyn Pinney (Principal Advisor Research and Policy), Larry Blair (Learning and Digital Asset Lead), Kim Whitwell (Communications Advisor), Jenny Wotten (Executive Administrator).

Part Attendance: Mike Perry (DOC), Grace Xu (DOC), Olivia Deakin (DOC)

- 1. Welcome, Apologies, Karakia:** Karakia to start the meeting, Peter Swann. Recap of yesterday's function, feedback from meeting with Minister McClay on 31 July 2024, Parliamentary Hunt, possible future legislative changes. Tim Gale talked about current hunting sector issues concerning the use of aerially applied toxins and impact on game animals and meetings held with ZIP and DOC regarding these matters.
- 2. Chairman's Welcome & Chairman's Report:** Grant Dodson welcomed Council members, staff, contractors.
- 3. Confirm the Agenda:** the agenda was discussed and confirmed. Question about whether a strategy session should be on today's agenda, and the potential of incorporating a strategy agenda item into all future meetings.

Motion 50/1: Moved Grant Dodson/Eugene Rewi: That the revised agenda is confirmed. CARRIED

4. Council Only Session - Environmental Scan

Motion 50/2: Moved Sharon Salmons/Kevin Eastwood: That Council moves into committee for the environmental scan agenda item. CARRIED

Motion 50/3: Moved Steve McFall/John Cook: That Council moves out of committee. CARRIED

- 5. Conflicts of Interest Register:** Council members were reminded of the requirement to declare any new conflicts of interest. The Code of Conduct is being updated and will include more detailed guidelines on conflicts of interest. Callum Sheridan is the new National President of the NZDA, this has been updated in the Interest Register.

Motion 50/4: Moved Steve McFall/Sharon Salmons: That the updated Conflict of Interest Register is received and noted. CARRIED

6. Conflicts of interest with agenda items: Council members were reminded of the requirement to declare any conflicts of interest with the meeting agenda items. Council member John Cook declared a conflict with all agenda items dealing with the Central North Island Sika HOSI proposal. It was confirmed that Council member Cook would be involved in the discussion, but would abstain, if there is a vote or any decision making.

Motion 50/5: Moved Steve McFall/Sharon Salmons: That Conflicts of Interest with meeting agenda items are noted. CARRIED

7. Risk Management Register Review: Management has reviewed the Risk Register and made no changes. Council unanimously noted and accepted the Risk Register. Council members were asked if they wanted to add anything or change anything. No additions or changes were proposed.

8. Minutes of Previous Meeting 20 June 2024 and In-Committee Minutes: The Minutes were approved with minor changes. Minutes of Previous In-Committee Minutes 20 June 2024 were taken as read with no changes.

Motion 50/6: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: That the Minutes of the 20 June 2024 meeting be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting. CARRIED

Motion 50/7: Moved Grant Dodson/Steve McFall: That the In Committee Minutes of the 20 June 2024 meeting be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting. CARRIED

9. Council Members Annual Evaluation Results: On 18 June 2024, Council members were sent a Microsoft Forms survey link to complete a Council Evaluation Survey for the Game Animal Council.

Full survey responses were provided to Council members for consideration of any next steps to address results. Discussion about results with further actions to be considered before the Governance Strategy session to be held in November 2024. The development of Terms of Reference for Subcommittees has provided more structure.

ACTION: Develop Standing Orders for meetings. Discussion about whether Standing Orders are needed or whether it stymies open conversations and locks into unnecessary bureaucracy. Steve McFall would want an explanation as to what is involved.

ACTION: Andrew Simpson will circulate Fish & Game Council Standing Orders as one example this Council could utilise and adapt as necessary. Grant Dodson asked Grace Xu if any of the other entities that DOC is responsible for, have Standing Orders.

Preference is for the questions in the Council Member Annual Evaluation Survey to remain the same year to year for comparative purposes.

Grace Xu from DOC is interested in knowing what skills gaps might exist. DOC have developed some governance training to be provided to the GAC and in future to new Council members (code of conduct for public servants, role and responsibilities, 2–3-hour teams session, Ben Reddiex will also participate). To be used in conjunction with our own induction procedures.

ACTION: Find out details from DOC for GAC Council members to participate in the upcoming induction training for new and existing Council members.

During discussion it was noted that there are many great resources for Council members who want to upskill their governance knowledge. Further discussion about skills of current Council members and the process of appointing new Council members based on their knowledge and skillset. It was suggested that Council conducts a skills matrix assessment of current Council members and identify any gaps, then follow through with any necessary upskilling.

ACTION: Council member Simpson offered to facilitate a one-page self-assessment of skills to help Tim Gale identify skills and gaps.

Grace Xu said that if we did the skills matrix with current Council members, then the sooner they could have that information, the better, as new Council member appointments lag time is 7-9 months. Kaylyn Pinney asked if there was a pathway that we could point people towards acquiring the skills needed to become a Council member. This would provide skills development to the hunting sector. This would provide a good pool of people skilled in governance, who could end up on the GAC, NZDA, Conservation Boards and other boards & Councils. Council member Eastwood did not agree that this is a GAC responsibility. He suggested that when members of the public apply to become a Council member and are not selected, the rejection letter could include suggestions for how people could upskill in the areas of governance and reapply at a later date.

ACTION: Investigate adding a section to the GAC website outlining what would strengthen applicants' positions when applying to become a Council member (and what kinds of skills and expertise are needed).

Discussion about GAC engaging in more community activities to advocate for the hunting sector and promote the GAC.

Grant Dodson thanked Council members for their participation and free and frank feedback.

Motion 50/8: Moved Grant Dodson/Kevin Eastwood: That Council receives and notes the survey results and (2) has considered any necessary next steps to address OK or Poor results. CARRIED

10. Annual Governance Workplan: Council members were invited to consider the Draft Governance Workplan and add any other items or dates they felt should be incorporated. Added Council workshop at the end of August and again in October (mainly for HOSI information), to set us up for the November Council Meeting. The workshops would only be used for training and information purposes and not for decision-making. Consideration of whether the November Council Meeting should be a full two days to incorporate the Strategy Planning session. Consensus was for a ¾ day Strategy Planning session followed by a full day Council Meeting.

11. Herds of Special Interest (HOSI) – Central North Island Sika Foundation HOSI Proposal Evaluation for Part A: HOSI Idea:

Council approved piloting the *HOSI Proposal Evaluation for Part A: HOSI Idea* in the May 2024 Council meeting (Motion 48/9) using the *Central North Island Sika Foundation HOSI Proposal - Part A* as a case study. A CNISF HOSI Evaluation Subcommittee was formed to undertake the evaluation (as per the Minutes of the Game Animal Council meeting, 9 May 2024).

The CNISF HOSI Evaluation Subcommittee has completed the *Sika HOSI Proposal Evaluation for Part A: HOSI Idea* and the results and recommendations presented to Council. The CNISF HOSI Evaluation Subcommittee reconvened on 24 June 2024 and approved the following motions:

- Subcommittee Motion 24 June 2024/2: That the HOSI Subcommittee recommends that Council resolves to thank staff for their work to date on the HOSI evaluation process and its documentation; and requests staff give consideration to consolidating GAC evaluation into a single, plain English document. The Subcommittee notes that overriding considerations will be addressed later following the steps in the current agreed HOSI process.
- Subcommittee Motion 24 June 2024/3: The HOSI Subcommittee recommends that the Council approves progression of the Sika HOSI proposal PART A to full HOSI proposal development subject to (a) Complexity - Development of a GAC engagement plan and seek to understand stakeholder and mana whenua values for incorporation into proposal, and (b) Herd Management - the GAC outline proposed management structure and roles and responsibilities.

Conflict of Interest noted: John Cook abstained from this discussion and voting on the resolution.

Motion 50/9: Moved Grant Dodson/Eugene Rewi: That Council receives and approves the resolutions of the Subcommittee's approved Motion 24 June 2024/2.

CARRIED

Motion 50/10: Moved Grant Dodson/Eugene Rewi: That Council receives and approves the resolutions of the Subcommittee’s approved Motion 24 June 2024/3.

CARRIED

Motion 50/11: Moved Grant Dodson/Eugene Rewi: That Council approves the progression of the Sika HOSI proposal Part A to full HOSI proposal development subject to (a) Complexity - Development of a GAC engagement plan and seek to understand stakeholder and mana whenua values for incorporation into proposal, and (b) Herd Management - outline the proposed management structure and roles and responsibilities.

CARRIED

HOSI Subcommittee Draft Terms of Reference: At the Council Meeting on 20 June 2024, it was agreed that the HOSI Subcommittee(s) needed Terms of Reference (TOR). Council members were provided with a draft Terms of Reference for consideration. The draft sets out the purpose of HOSI Subcommittees, roles & responsibilities of the Council, HOSI Subcommittee members, GAC Chair & Moderator, and the GAC operational team.

ACTION: Note a change to the Terms of Reference on page 44 so that the whole of Council can initiate amendments.

Motion 50/12: Moved Melissa Jackson/Peter Swann: That Council receives and approves the Herds of Special Interest (HOSI) Subcommittee(s) Terms of Reference.

CARRIED

Kaylyn Pinney presented on recent HOSI work. Tim Gale and Kaylyn Pinney attended meetings with DOC, CNISF and the FWF. Kaylyn Pinney presented high level HOSI information at the NZDA conference. Tim Gale and Kaylyn Pinney participated in a HOSI wānanga in sika country with Scott Talbott, Tom Loughlin, Cam Speedy and Tim Maule. This experience has strengthened the relationships we already had and has resulted in the development of a draft document “Exploring a Sika HOSI”. This document is currently with DOC for consideration and input. The sika wānanga has also resulted in some new international collaborations and partnerships. GAC Management is working with DOC to formulate a high-level HOSI comms plan. Finally, an overview of the FWF application to develop a HOSI proposal was presented to Council.

Formation of a Wapiti HOSI Evaluation Subcommittee: The Fiordland Wapiti Foundation (FWF) has applied to the Council for its support to develop a Wapiti HOSI in Fiordland.

HOSI proposal development requires significant GAC resources. Accordingly, GAC commitment to support the full development of a HOSI proposal should only be

granted for applications that the Council considers likely to meet the first two criteria for HOSI designation.

A diagram has been developed to show the next steps for this process, between this meeting, and the November 2024 meeting. Council noted and received Kaylyn Pinney's presentation.

Motion 50/13: Moved Sharon Salmons/Andrew Simpson: That Council approves the formation of a Wapiti HOSI Evaluation Subcommittee. CARRIED

Council was asked to appoint three Council members to form the Wapiti HOSI Evaluation Subcommittee to consider the FWF's application. The following members were appointed to the Wapiti HOSI Evaluation Subcommittee:

1. Eugene Rewi
2. Melissa Jackson
3. Callum Sheridan

Motion 50/14: Moved Grant Dodson/Peter Swann: That Council appoints Eugene Rewi, Melissa Jackson and Callum Sheridan to the Wapiti HOSI Evaluation Subcommittee. CARRIED

12. Health and Safety Review: The Game Animal Council has a primary duty of care to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of our Council members, staff & contractors while they are working for the Game Animal Council or undertaking any other activity the Game Animal Council has asked them to take part in.

One of the biggest changes to health and safety considerations for the GAC has been an increase in the number of staff members and staff using personal vehicles for long distance travel (two hours plus) in many cases. Another related consideration is that all staff work remotely. The updated Health & Safety Policy seeks to address this change with the inclusion of Section 7.5, Fatigue related accidents during commute. The risks are also addressed in the Risk Management Register.

An example of safeguarding Council members and staff is the option to stay overnight close to the meeting location, rather than driving home tired after a long day/meeting.

Discussion about the updated Health & Safety Policy, v3.0 and the application of the policy for Council members, staff & contractors and suggestions of a future possible update, when the budget permits, to allow staff to claim biannually for eyesight testing and glasses (due to prolonged computer use which can lead to eye strain and the need for glasses).

Motion 50/15: Moved Andrew Simpson/Steve McFall: That the Council receives and approves the updated Health & Safety Policy, v3.0. CARRIED

ACTIONS: (1) all Council members, staff, and contractors to review and sign the updated Health & Safety Policy to indicate they have read and understood responsibilities that the GAC has, alongside their personal responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

(2) All Council members, staff and contractors undertake an assessment of Hazards in their main GAC place/s of work.

13. Presentation on Recreational Meat Donations – Dr Kaylyn Pinney: Kaylyn Pinney presented to Council, the work the GAC has been doing to support recreational hunter’s harvested meat donations. A question-and-answer session followed.

Discussion points: The GAC would be the host for the database; the system allows traceability back to batches. The mandate for this initiative comes under the GAC’s safety function, as outlined in Section 7(1)(c) of the Game Animal Council Act 2013. Much of the information is already available online and GAC will package it for hunters and meat donors. As the host, the GAC will have access to all the information - users own their own information and have administrative ability to amend. MPI has been presented with the concept and are supportive. MPI will be involved in checking the information is accurate and meets food safety standards.

ACTION: Review wording to ensure it is clear the GAC is just providing information and acknowledging that the responsibility for certifying meat lies with government agencies like MPI. Suggestion to incorporate a limited liability statement to mitigate risk exposure.

14. General Manager’s Report: Tim Gale presented his General Manager’s report covering:

- Meeting the Statement of Performance Expectations 2023-24 targets
- Herds of Special Interest
- NZ Game Animal Hunting Research Project
- Submissions
- External engagements
- FWF legal case and Roadshow
- Tahr management
- Vertebrate toxic agents
- Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Workshop
- Voluntary Certification of Hunting Guides
- Parliamentary Hunt
- Staff remuneration pay schedule and payment dates

Tim Gale thanked staff for their support in helping achieve targets and providing support at functions.

Discussion about some of the matters covered in the CWD Workshop, recently convened by the GAC and hosted by Deer Industry NZ:

- How CWD is transported into New Zealand (urine, grain and prions in the protein – on hides and antlers)
- The disease is cervid specific and doesn't spread to other species.
- It would ruin NZ's TSE-free status and deer species here.
- There are risks with bows also as they are shot into deer which may be infected, removed from animals, then re-used.

Council member Callum Sheridan is keen to see the information shared widely with stakeholders.

ACTION: Kaylyn Pinney to provide a presentation on CWD next meeting and then a follow up presentation on African swine fever and bird flu (avian flu).

ACTION: After CWD Presentation, review Risk Register to see if it covers risks from CWD adequately.

Motion 50/16: Moved Sharon Salmons /Peter Swann: That the Council receives and notes the General Manager's report – August 2024. CARRIED

15. Quarterly Report 4 2023-24: the GAC is required to report against the non-financial performance measures and the financial forecasts outlined in the Statement of Performance Expectations (SPE) 2023-24 and its annual workplan on a quarterly basis.

Council was initially provided with a draft Quarterly Report in the meeting papers, followed by the final Quarterly Report by email on 30 July 2024. The Quarter 4 Report has now been sent to the Department of Conservation (along with the quarterly invoice). The report was also circulated to Council members on 30 July 2024.

Quarter 4 marked significant progress for the Game Animal Council across various fronts. Reporting against the SPE Performance Measures and Targets we achieved 25/28 performance targets outlined in the Statement Performance Expectations 2023-24. It was recommended that Council receives and notes the Quarterly Performance Report 4 2023-24.

Motion 50/17: Moved Callum Sheridan/Melissa Jackson: That the Council receives and notes the Quarterly Performance Report 4 2023-24. CARRIED

16. Financial Reporting & Variances: Tim Gale presented to the Council on the financial performance and position of the Council for the 2023-24 financial year and income and expenditure versus budget for the period 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024.

Motion 50/18: Moved Eugene Rewi/Steve McFall: That the Council (1) receives and adopts the Financial & Variances Report for the period 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024; and (2) acknowledges the overbudget expenditure greater than \$5,000. CARRIED

ACTION: The discussion relating to Motion 50/18 (3) was for the General Manager to draft the proposed changes and submit to the Council for further consideration.

ACTION: Tim Gale to come back to the Council to adjust local travel as listed on page 96 so that the columns add up.

17. Finance Committee Terms of Reference: Since the establishment of the Game Animal Council, there has been a need for a limited number of people to be involved in the approval and authorisation of GAC expenditure. These people have collectively been known as the GAC's Finance Committee.

Following on from the development of Terms of Reference for the Te Kāhui Māori Subcommittee and the HOSI Subcommittees, management considers it prudent to also have established Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee.

Motion 50/19: Moved Andrew Simpson/Melissa Jackson: That Council receives and approves the GAC's Finance Committee's Terms of Reference. CARRIED

In conjunction with the adoption of the Finance Committee's new Terms of Reference, it was considered prudent to reconfirm current approved members of the GAC's Finance Committee, as previously minuted, at the time of each appointment:

- Grant Dodson, Council Chair
- Sharon Salmons, Deputy Chair & Chair of the Finance Committee
- Eugene Rewi
- John Cook
- Steve McFall
- Callum Sheridan
- Andrew Simpson.

Motion 50/20: Moved Grant Dodson/Melissa Jackson: That Council reconfirms the current approved members of the GAC's Finance Committee. CARRIED

ACTION: remove Steve McFall from Finance Committee when his term as Council member finishes, remove Sharon Salmons from Finance Committee when her term as Council member finishes. Ensure that Andrew Simpson has full access to Kiwibank. Nominated Callum Sheridan to take over the Kiwibank Administrator role from Sharon Salmons.

Motion 50/21: Moved Grant Dodson/John Cook: That Council approves (1) the removal of Steve McFall from the Finance Committee when his term as Council

member finishes, (2) the removal of Sharon Salmons from Finance Committee when her term as Council member finishes, (3) approves the nomination of Callum Sheridan to take over the Kiwibank Administrator role from Sharon Salmons when her term expires. CARRIED

18. Action items and matters arising: Council members considered the list of action items and progress made against each. Discussion about feral range, discussion about future strategy agenda item, what does the future look like, are Council's priorities correct or do they need changing, do Council's decisions (made at Council Meetings) follow the strategic direction? Incorporate a strategy direction in Council Papers so that each decision is assessed against our strategic direction.

ACTION: Redraft Council paper template to incorporate a standard assessment of how each decision/resolution addresses current and/or future strategic direction. Further discussion about how to incorporate this, will be brainstormed at the Council's November meeting

19. Standing items – electronic approval of submissions & correspondence received outside of meetings: Council discussion about documents finalised and approved between meetings.

20. General business: Firearms licencing discussion, synergies with Better Hunting. How can the Council support the NZDA with the practical HUNTS component. Tim Gale read out feedback from Don Hammond regarding yesterday's anniversary event.

Council members would like to be advised when operational staff are undertaking or participating in activities in their local areas, preferably ahead of the activity taking place.

21. Meeting review & close: Council member Melissa Jackson provided feedback on how the Council had performed during the meeting. Yes, Council achieved all that was expected to be achieved during this meeting, the Meeting Pack was of good quality, Council members didn't waste time, Council members spent their time in governance mode, and it was a respectful safe place for everyone to speak, overall, a really good meeting. Melissa Jackson commended Kaylyn Pinney on her presentations.

Karakia to close the meeting, Peter Swann.

The meeting closed at 3.45pm.

Next meeting is on 21 and 22 November 2024.