

MINUTES OF THE GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING 28 SEPTEMBER 2015

Held at Rotorua Deerstalkers Clubrooms, Neil Hunt Park, Tarawera Road Rotorua

Present: Don Hammond (Chair), Bill O’Leary, Garry Ottmann, Geoff Kerr, Alec McIver, Mark Brough, Steve McFall, Terry Pierson, Carol Watson

Jenny Wotten (Executive Officer), Ben Reddiex (DOC), Denley Tarplett (NZDA Rotorua Branch)

Also in attendance: Minister Peter Dunne

- 1. Welcome and Introductions:** Don Hammond welcomed The Minister, Councillors and Ben Reddiex, thanking Councillors for their attendance at the Sika Show and explaining that the agenda would be amended to accommodate the Minister’s attendance.

Apologies: Lou Sanson, Mike Slater, Roger Duxfield, Roy Sloan, Jonathon Wallis

Motion 8/1: Moved Garry Ottmann/Steve McFall: That apologies be accepted.	CARRIED
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Commonalities of interest document: Don Hammond asked Councillors to revisit the document to identify areas of conflict that might need to be annotated, including conflicting commercial interests – in the interest of transparency **Action item 8/1.**

- 2. Minutes of previous meeting 6 July 2015:** Delete para and words in DOC issues page and one word change in Minister’s address. The Minutes having been previously circulated, were accepted with these amendments.

Motion 8/2: Moved Terry Pierson/Alec McIver: that the Minutes of the 6 July 2015 Meeting be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.	CARRIED
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Minister’s address: Don Hammond welcomed the Minister, acknowledging his commitment and contribution to the hunting sector in NZ. The Minister said he enjoyed the Sika Show and was impressed by the huge number of attendees that indicated the Show had just about outgrown its venue. He said it was an ideal forum for both himself and the GAC to engage with hunters at the grass roots level. The Minister presented Alec McIver with his Certificate in Outdoor Leadership (HUNTS Instructor). The Minister briefly discussed the GAC funding paper, the Mountain Safety Council and the potential Sika Herd of Special Interest in the Central North Island.

Mountain Safety Council developments: Bill O’Leary provided a briefing on the Mountain Safety Council situation from an NZDA perspective. Restructuring within MSC has affected their arms training program, their standing technical committee which is to become defunct, the removal of their two Program Managers responsible for face-to-face contact with hunters and their training and assessment program, and other changes. The Whakatupatu Program that was being delivered up until now has been cancelled. Some instructors have resigned because of the changes. Bill has been advised that Ngāti Tūwharetoa hunting opportunities are being compromised by the fact that this program is no longer being run. The Minister thanked Bill for this update and said these were concerning developments about which he will continue to liaise with the GAC and NZDA. Don Hammond observed that it was a worrying development that impacted hunter’s ability to hunt even on their own lands and that the GAC had a role to try to help find a way forward.

Terms of Reference (TOR), Hunting Review: The Minister has now had feedback from both the GAC and DOC on the TOR for the Hunting Review. The plan is to begin with an information gathering exercise to try to ascertain the full extent of illegal hunting and then the Minister will contact key organisations to find the best way to move forward. In discussion it emerged that one area likely to

create anomalies was in looking at the number of charges laid per offence as sometimes there is only one charge laid when multiple charges could have been warranted.

Herd of Special Interest (HOSI): The Minister was pleased to note the early identification of several potential HOSI candidates but acknowledged the process is not completely clear and will require further clarification between the GAC, DOC and his office and there is an opportunity for some profile building to be carried out in the next 12 to 18 months to determine who needs to be consulted and how, a closer look at the criteria and how they will be applied, how to manage the process and what contribution DOC might make to GAC in terms of the machinery of government and due process.

GAC Profile: The Minister is pleased that the GAC has already established a good track record of engaging with hunters and should aim to maintain a high profile and positive recognition in terms of what it has done and achieved. Some GAC activities to-date have been very valuable but not particularly visible to the public. Hunters are interested in HOSI and want confidence and assurance that the Council is working for them. Mark Brough commented that he was approached by many hunters at the Sika Show asking what the GAC's policy was on the use of 1080. Mark Brough and Garry Ottmann will draft a document identifying issues in the lead up to GAC establishing a policy on 1080 **Action 8/2**.

3. DOC issues: Ben Reddiex provided an update on the organisational changes underway within the Department, the Department's National Hunting Advisors' contribution to an inter agency safety committee and accepted hunting practice stakeholders meeting, changes to hunting permits and the DOC website, and discussed opportunities in profiling the hunting sectors contribution to conservation. The Ruahine WARO Review which is underway was also discussed (the following was noted):

- The current Ruahines review is intended to address concerns raised by LNIHLG and others.
- The Department has advised the WARO activity land classification decision for the Ruahine Forest Park will be reviewed, and this process is currently underway. The Department has met with recreational hunters and WARO operators, and the report to the decision maker is being compiled.
- The Department is not extending the current review of WARO activity land classification beyond the Ruahine Forest Park. The Department is committed to initiating a broader more comprehensive review on the wider WARO sector – the scope would cover all areas. The Department commenced discussions on the opportunities, challenges, and potential parties to be involved in the review at the last Council meeting.
- Under the previous 2009-14 national WARO permit, WARO activity was restricted in Ruahine Forest Park on the basis that it was prohibited for the period from 1 December to 30 April inclusive. The change in WARO activity land classification (from being restricted to being permitted) under the 2015-18 national WARO permit does not take effect until 1 December 2015, as this is the first date that WARO will be permitted in the Ruahines when it had not been allowed previously.
- The national WARO permit 2015-18 commenced on 1 July 2015, and the Department intends to complete the current Ruahines review by 30 September 2015.
- If the current Ruahines review results in changes being made to the national WARO permit or any other changes in management for the Park, the intended completion date for the review means these changes should be in place by 1 December 2015.

4. Review of Wild Animal Recovery Operation (WARO) concessions: The 2009 process of issuing WARO permits was undertaken as a non-notified process, however DOC consulted the wider hunting sector including recreational hunting interests. In 2014 DOC again made the decision to embark on a non-notified process for issuing new WARO concessions, however the major difference between

this process and the 2009 process was that DOC decided to exclude all parties except WARO operators and venison processors from discussions regarding the content of the new concessions. A number of WARO operators and venison processors did not support either this process or the outcome. The GAC became aware via third parties of the review being undertaken and initiated some discussions with DOC regarding an alternative regime for managing WARO and put forward a proposal to DOC which they subsequently rejected. The GAC was not consulted regarding form or content of the current 2015 WARO Concession document.

In a draft concession document sent to WARO operators in April 2015 the designation of land within the Ruahine Forest Park remained unchanged. WARO activity was restricted in the Ruahine Forest Park on the basis that it was prohibited for the period from 1 December to 30 April inclusive.

However in the final concession document the designation was changed from restricted to permitted. In response to concerns raised by recreational hunters and the GAC regarding the effects of this change on recreational hunting and conservation, the Department advised that the WARO activity land classification decision would be reviewed. However DOC is not extending the current review of WARO activity beyond the Ruahine Forest Park.

As part of the review of the Review process, DOC held two meetings in the lower North Island to seek the views of recreational hunters.

4a Garry Ottmann attended the meeting in Palmerston North and noted the key points that arose from that meeting as they relate to the decision to change the designation of the Ruahine Forest Park from restricted to permitted:

- There was no request from any WARO operator or any other party for any change to the land status as part of the concession review process
- The only WARO operator that is currently using the Ruahine Forest Park indicated that he would be targeting stags only. The GAC contends that this will exacerbate conflicts between recreational hunters and WARO and that it will have no conservation benefit and in the long term will result in a conservation loss
- The decision was not based on any scientific information. The GAC had scientific information supplied subsequent to the decision peer review. This review indicated that the information would not support the decision to change the designation and in some cases could actually support no change to the land designation
- DOC staff members in other forums had given undertakings that no changes, if any, to land classifications would be made until the CMS process was completed
- The decision was made by a staff member on temporary secondment
- Regional DOC staff recommended no change to the land classification
- The effect on recreational hunting was not well understood or appreciated.

4b It was noted that a recommendation was to have gone to the decision maker by last week. The GAC will be seeking to get DOC to withdraw the changes and revert back to the 2009 to 2014 status open period for the Ruahines (1 December to 30 April) and with no targeting of stags. The GAC will request that protocols are put in place to ensure this doesn't happen again. The GAC will write formally to DOC and Minister seeking a review of the Ruahine WARO review
Action 8/3.

5. Action Point Responses from previous meetings:

- a.** Policy for taking dogs into Te Urewera – the GAC sent a draft to the Te Urewera Board and have had no feedback.
- b.** Steve McFall is still trying to make progress on the Kauri Die back issue.

- c. Game Trophy Export Levy working group is making steady progress. Next part of the process will be to document the steps taken to-date and the consultation that has occurred. Need to quantify trophy Export Certificate estimates with some scientific rigour, suggest timeframes, make recommendations to the Minister and seek his feedback on the process. GAC needs to make a concerted effort to find the resources to pull all these elements together. The Hunting Guides Association is ready to make voluntary payments but the GAC is not yet in a position to receive payments until the collection mechanism is up and running through the website. Currently there is the yet to be introduced GAC Export Levy process and the existing Department of Conservation issued Certificate of Export. It is hoped that the GAC will be able to take over the production of a combined Export Levy and Certificate of Export when suitable authorisation has been received. Payment of the levy and/or Certificate will be via an online process designed to make it as simple as possible for the hunter/exporter.
- d. Steve McFall circulated the redrafted Web Links policy for adoption. One amendment was added to the "Criteria for allowing a link may include but not limited to the following: "has content that is relevant to NZGAC interests and NZGAC stakeholders".

<p>Motion 8/3: Moved Steve McFall/Carol Watson: That with this one added amendment, the NZGAC endorses the Web Links Policy and that it be posted on the GAC Website. CARRIED</p>

- e. HOSI Criteria – Action 3/17, the criteria to be revisited to ensure it is clear about the levy as it might impact decisions for people proposing HOSI
- f. GAC Budget – Action 3/15, the budget has been presented to the Minister.
- g. Areas and regions of significant interest to the GAC, Action 4/5, ongoing.
- h. Action 5/10 - Don Hammond to write to DOC about the full review on WARO going forward to ensure this does not become rushed at the end.
- i. Action 5/14 Alex Gale contact. This continues to be worked on and is close to completion.
- j. Action 6/6 – The Bowhunting permit conditions are now up on DOC website and will need to also go on the GAC website **Action 8/4.**
- k. Action 6/7 – Geoff Kerr said he has identified relevant research to go on the GAC website (Geoff to curate and have it added to the website)
- l. Action 6/8 GAC Act Review – The GAC will be writing to the Minister to formalise a process for this review which is critical to the next 4 to 5 years. A new Working Group was formed comprising Don Hammond, Alec McIver, Garry Ottmann and Terry Pierson with other Councillors and non Council members to provide input also **Action 8/5.**
- m. Action 7/5 re: DOC wider sector conversation with operators, processors, Hunting Guides etc - Don Hammond will to write to DOC asking where this is at.
- n. Action 7/6 – The Working Group (Garry and Geoff) wrote a GAC submission regarding the OSPRI and TbFree 30 or 40 Year Plan. Jenny to circulate to all Councillors. Geoff will send it to Steve on GAC letterhead to put on the website **Action 8/6.** Ensuing discussion about future course of action for time critical submissions that don't allow full GAC in-house consultation. It was noted that Councillors had agreed on protocols at previous meetings accepting electronic internal distribution of submissions and reports but it was agreed that there should be some evidence that sub committees have signed off submissions and note any individual objections or abstentions and possibly a policy on this.
- o. Action 7/8: Fiordland Wapiti Foundation for Wapiti to become a HOSI - Garry spoke about this. As noted above in the Minister's address, the GAC needs to liaise with the Minister and DOC about the management plan and templates and to make sure we are talking to the right people at DOC.
- p. Action 7/10: the Communication Strategy is an important issue to progress.
- q. Geoff Kerr said we have an opportunity to present a submission on the 35 year process for 1080 but limited time to consult each Councillor for their views. Don summarised the issues including the tight timeframe, submission required within a week. Geoff and Garry were given

clear details of what to put in the submission, flagging the following key issues: opposition to any long term (eg 35 year term), preference for a complete review of the consent process every 5 or so years, issues around monitoring, the complete lack of detail about time and place, bykill of other species where game animals are present, the very real possibility of advancements in poisons and alternatives over the next 35 years together with name changes and legislative changes etc. It was further noted that although the NZDA and the NZPHA had major concerns about the granting of the 35 Year Permits, they had been advised they were not 'affected parties' and not able to contribute to the discussion, therefore it was appropriate for the GAC to speak up on behalf of these two major stakeholders. The GAC is willing to accept the use of 1080 to kill possums and other pests as long as we don't get the bykill of deer and other species. **Action 8/7** Garry & Geoff to circulate a draft by Wednesday. During this discussion Mark Brough recorded his objection to the GAC submission as it is inconsistent with his views, already expressed in different forums.

- r. Mark Brough led a discussion about consulting and liaising with iwi as required by the provisions of the GAC Act and our 5 year Plan. The GAC needs to put in place a plan for engaging with iwi. It was suggested that we begin by establishing a communication strategy, ascertaining what iwi liaison avenues already exist and talking to the Iwi Leaders Forum sub group. Mark Brough will develop a discussion paper on how we might progress this **Action 8/8**. Don Hammond will write to the Conservation Boards attaching our 5 Year Plan and offering to meet with them **Action 8/9**.

6. Correspondence: As presented.

Motion 8/4: Moved Garry Ottmann/Carol Watson: That inward correspondence be accepted and outward correspondence be approved.	CARRIED
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7. Financial Matters

- a. **Account balances** – The financial report was generated by Jenny Wotten from Banklink. There is some work to be done on the codes and naming conventions.

b. **Account Summary:**

Account Balances 6 July 2015	
Investment – On call	\$41,545.16
Current Account	<u>\$428.13</u>
	\$41,973.29
Plus Income	<u>\$56,830.18</u>
	\$98,803.47
Total Expenses	\$22,642.04
Balances 25 Sept 2015	
Investment -On Call	\$71,774.35
Current Account	<u>\$9,689.15</u>
	\$81,463.50

- c. **Annual Report:** Don has been in touch with the Auditor General's office to see what is required.

Motion 8/4: Moved Terry Pierson/Steve McFall: That the financial report be accepted and that payments made be approved.	CARRIED
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8. Working Group Updates:

- a. **Statutory Processes/WARO:** discussion about WARO/Ruahine. CMSs currently under review are Hawkes Bay, Wellington and Nelson/Marlborough. DOC has agreed to provide GAC with information on these once submissions analyses have been completed.
- b. **Funding/Levies:** Cabinet paper first draft finished, GAC needs to provide evidence to support the requested funding.
- c. **Website/Comms/Liaison:** Steve reported there were no new email or website issues. Weblinks Policy to be put up on website.
- d. **Training and Education:** Carol Watson spoke about her paper on the online American Bowhunting course which has been offered to the GAC free of charge. Participants are only charged on successful completion. NZ Bowhunters currently don't need any qualifications so the availability of this course might encourage some to investigate and undertake online training and it sends a strong message to organisations like SPCA that GAC are serious about providing training opportunities. It is envisaged that the certificate would be NZ specific, contain the GAC logo and be available for self-printing. The GAC would be able to request monthly reports which would show us details such as the age, gender and how many Bowhunters are out there and interested in training. Carol to arrange for the link to be added to the GAC website. Don will write to the Minister advising him of developments and publicity opportunities and Carol will communicate this to the National Bowhunter Education Foundation (NBEF) **Action 8/10.**

<p>Motion 8/5: Moved Carol Watson/Garry Ottmann: that the GAC accepts the NBEF's offer to be the agent for a NZ version of the official Game Animal Council's NZ Bowhunting Safety Education Course.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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9. General Business

- a: **HOSI** – Garry Ottmann said that we need to start pulling all the elements together in a cohesive approach. It was encouraging to see how many people at the Sika Show were talking about potential HOSIs and we need to start a detailed analysis of the essential elements of establishing a HOSI:
 - what is the purpose of having a HOSI
 - what is the interest and who has the interest
 - who is responsible for writing the HOSI plan, how long is it expected to take, how much will it cost
 - what is the gazettal process,
 - what are the hunting and conservation implications, investments
 - how did we call for expressions of interest and what are the timeframes and cut off dates or each round
 - what is the appropriate level of preparatory work for proposed HOSI by the GAC as facilitators
 - how are potential HOSI managed and prioritised
 - how does the GAC manage expectations and disappointments
 - how many HOSI can be developed at the same time or how much time is needed before the next HOSI is developed
 - what community buy in exists

- what is appropriate level of iwi, DOC and liaison group consultation
- how will we know/measure if a HOSI plan is working and meeting its objectives and how do we go about rescinding a HOSI that is not working (if animal numbers have gotten too high, if there is environmental damage etc)

With our presently limited resources it is envisaged that HOSI proposers will need to do most of the legwork themselves but GAC will have a role in ensuring all interested parties are brought into the development process. We will need a template, which can be adjusted to different HOSI and locations but with some agreed essential elements, generic principles and slightly different objectives for each herd. We will need to be clear about who has had input to the process, who is responsible for writing up the plan, what resources are involved, the names and roles of key DOC staff involved and the proposed timeframe. The Sika Herd is gaining momentum and has good resourcing so could move quickly even though the Wapiti herd had a 10 year head start. Other contenders include the Stewart Island herd which is in a National Park and the Sambar Herd. It would be useful to find out what other herds might be under consideration and the GAC needs to work out an avenue for collating this information. Our role is to provide opportunities for all of our stakeholders to be involved, provide guidance to steer proposers through the process with realistic expectations and modify the process if necessary during the initial prototype stage. Our Strategic Plan already makes reference to this.

- b. Research:** Geoff Kerr provided a presentation which he circulated. He stressed that research needs to be specific and focussed, aligned with GAC mission and goals and specific issues, such as hunter safety etc. In order to predict outcomes of establishing a HOSI we need scientific data on people, places, herds, ecology etc. Monitoring will be necessary so that we can report on the impact of HOSI after their establishment. It is necessary to invest some money in research or find the means to ensure the research is undertaken in a thorough manner and is well documented. Factor in monitoring and social needs into the plans, changing the herd structure in management, models and principles. Geoff is happy to write articles and columns to get the GAC messages out. Garry Ottmann will find the research undertaken on Tasmanian fallow herds and provide it to Geoff. Geoff's presentation forms a good basis for the development of a GAC Research Strategy.
- c. Succession Planning:** Don Hammond advised that at some time in the next 12 months there needs to be some thought given to succession planning. Bearing this in mind, Don wants to hear from Councillors as to whether they will be seeking re appointment so that he can advise the Minister who will make decisions. Don said Councillors need to think about the skill sets we need to have around the table and how we go about managing deficiencies such as stakeholder groups that are currently not represented. Agenda item for the next meeting – appointment of a Deputy Chair **Action 8/11**.
- c. Animal Welfare:** Geoff Kerr organised and chaired a meeting of key stakeholders on 17th August that made good progress defining what is 'accepted hunting practice'. Each agency that participated in the meeting (NZDA, NZPHGA, SCINZ, NZPHA, NZBHS) will ratify the final wording after which Geoff will write an article for hunting magazines and circulate to Council. NAWAC is very happy with the outcome as it could provide a test for possible prosecution cases. The final wording needs to be communicated to GAC stakeholders **Action 8/12**. It was a very good outcome following a collaborative exercise which brought lots of organisations and GAC stakeholders together. The wording of the over-riding principle of accepted hunting practice is:

Hunters in New Zealand have a responsibility to conduct their method of hunting and animal harvest to the highest practicable standards of animal welfare with regard to minimising distress and suffering and to humanely kill animals being hunted.

Each individual hunting organisation will develop a code of conduct consistent with this statement and applicable to generally accepted hunting practices within their hunting method.

- d. Japanese deer researcher query** – Garry Ottmann was given a mandate from Council to put together a program on behalf of the Japanese Deer Society about managing over abundant wild deer in Japan **Action 8/13**. It is proposed that representatives will visit NZ to look at deer farms, processing centres, forestry, small land plots and learn about our firearms regulations. Don Hammond said one of our key messages to them has to be the cultural shift or maturity that has occurred since the GAC has been in operation, making our game animals resources rather than pests to be destroyed.
- e. Trust for funding research** - Steve McFall was approached by Kaylyn McBrearty to see if the GAC is interested in forming a Trust to fund her research. Garry Ottmann spoke about changes to charitable trust rules applicable to all charitable organisations and queried whether a statutory body can form trusts and if so which Councillors would be prepared to serve on a Trust. The general consensus was that Councillors are happy to provide advice but probably not serve on a trust although there is scope for the idea to be further progressed at a future date.
- f. Parliamentary Pig Hunt** – Alec McIver, Steve McFall and Garry Ottmann are continuing planning for a pig hunt possibly in Easter 2016.
- g. Recent Parliamentary Hunt** – Garry Ottmann provided feedback on the recent hunt which included five Members of Parliament and their various family members who all got a thorough education in game hunting and the role of the GAC. Garry will write to the station owners to thank them for hosting and has also passed on his thanks to Geoff Kerr and Roy Sloan for helping in the hunt, endorsed by Don Hammond.
- 10. Next Meeting Planning:** The next meeting be held in Christchurch on either 25th November 2015 or 17th February 2016. Jenny to issue invitation and notice of meeting. Other future dates pencilled in are 27th April, then 29th June, then following the Tahr Show in August.

Meeting closed at 4 pm.