

MINUTES OF THE GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING 6 JULY 2015

Held at Department of Conservation Head Office Wellington

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

Jenny Wotten (Executive Officer), Ben Reddiex (DOC), Gerald Telford (NZ Professional Hunting Guides Assoc)

Also in attendance: Minister Peter Dunne, Fraser Seifert (accompanying Minister), Carl McGuiness (Acting Deputy Director General Partnerships DOC), Bruce Parkes (Deputy Director General Science & Policy).

- 1. Welcome and Introductions:** Don Hammond welcomed Councillors, Ben Reddiex and Gerald Telford to the meeting, providing information on Gerald’s background and areas of expertise. Don thanked Ben for hosting us again at the DOC Head Office.

Apologies: Carol Watson, Lou Sanson, Mike Slater, James Guild, Jonathon Wallis

Motion 7/1: Moved Terry Pierson/Roger Duxfield: 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 commercial interest – in the interest of public transparency **Action item 7/1.**

- 2. Minutes of previous meeting 20 April 2015:** Three minor amendments to be made. The Minutes having been previously circulated, were accepted with amendments as discussed.

Motion 7/2: Moved Terry Pierson/Roy Sloan: that the Minutes of the 20 April 2015 Meeting be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.	CARRIED
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Matters arising: Covered under Action Point responses.

3. Action Point Responses –

- Suggested changes have been made to website wording as per Minutes 20 April 2015 (Steve McFall Action items 5/8 & 6/2).
- Garry Ottmann advised that the Parliamentary Hunting Trip will be held over the period Sunday 12 July to Sunday 19 July. Roy Sloan and Geoff Kerr will also be helping. Don Hammond thanked Garry for organising the Parliamentary Hunt. Garry Ottmann said there will be another hunt in the near future for the MPs and their families that missed out this time. Steve McFall and Alec McIver are organising a future Parliamentary Pig Hunt in the North Island Action item 6/5.
- Steve McFall said he had made no progress yet with the Kauri Die back issue and he will now liaise with Ben Reddiex to obtain contact information for the specific Project Manager based in Northland, Action item 6/10.
- Don Hammond led a discussion about the draft budget and GAC Annual Operational Work Plan and how we measure our success. In relation to the requirement to review the Game Animal Act in the next year or two, Don asked Councillors to give some thought as to how we can structure this so that we don’t end up with rambling discussions, take into account the impact of other legislation and how we put forward our findings to the Minister. Mark Brough made the point that the GAC needs to be able to measure and monitor its performance.
- Tuhoe Dog Policy: the draft policy was sent to Tamati Kruger on 12 June 2015 but we haven’t heard anything back yet.

- f. Commonalities of interest. Some conflicts are inherent because of the various organisations Councillors belong to (the very knowledge and experience which saw them appointed to Council). The potential conflicts just need to be noted and there may be occasions where Councillors need to declare a commercial conflict of interest and refrain from voting on particular matters. Councillors agreed that it may be easier for colleagues to look at each other's commonalities and alert them to potential commercial conflicts, see **Action item 7/2**.
- g. Table of action items –
- To be amended as per discussion on completed actions. It was noted that we are occasionally being asked to comment on or become involved in a range of items which we only have responsibility at a Governance level. It was pointed out that we are not an enforcement agency and should leave enforcement to the police.
 - There are some upcoming meetings on the issue of Illegal Hunting and the safe use of Firearms – the GAC should aim to be represented at these meetings.
 - The GAC was recently contacted comment on an incident involving unsafe use of firearms near a walking track. Councillors felt that the GAC should have a policy on acknowledging complaints, following up complaints with the relevant enforcement agency and putting some pressure on the police to pursue offenders if the circumstances involve illegal hunting or illegal or unsafe use of firearms as per our mandate under the Act. The NZDA and the NZPHA and the Walking Access Commission may already have policies around such issues and the GAC needs to liaise with them first to see how they address the issue. Mark Brough will draft a policy **Action item 7/3**.
 - Bill O'Leary provided feedback on his attendance at the Skills Active Conference where he was representing both the NZDA and the GAC. Mountain Safety Council was also represented at the Conference. Skills Active are reasonably confused as they were trying to have a policy involving hunting and fishing and having one qualification standard. Tertiary qualification currently being used by NZDA is to be phased out, they want to retain a tertiary qualification (hunting, fishing, commercial harvest, personal harvest etc). . Bill says that the online package we are looking at already is the vehicle that we want and that he doesn't want a Tertiary package developed by an Industry Training Organisation (ITO). Small working group of GAC to develop a paper and recommendations on how GAC should be educating people. Bill (Chair), Geoff, Alec, Carol & Gerald Telford. We need to drive it. Various complications involving recreational hunting vs commercial hunters, pest control etc. Intrinsic to us as we endorse the Hunts Programme.

4. Correspondence:

As presented. Don Hammond drew particular attention to the letter to James Guild, President, NZ Association of Game Estates and the response received.

<p>Motion 7/3: Moved Mark Brough/Roger Duxfield: That inward correspondence be accepted and outward correspondence be approved.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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5. Financial Matters

- a. **Account balances** - Terry stressed the need to identify working groups such as WARO or AATH etc when claiming expenses so this can be reflected in budget. Don Hammond to contact Accountant and clarify accounting fees already charged. For bookings through the Air NZ website, Councillors are also asked to specify the nature of the meeting attended.

<p>Motion 7/4: Moved Terry Pierson/Roger Duxfield: That the financial report be accepted and that payments made be approved.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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b. Account Summary:

Account Balances	
Investment -On Call	\$ 61,191.90
Current Account	\$ <u>4,205.09</u>
	\$ 65,396.99
Plus Income	\$ <u>1520.09</u>
	\$ 66,917.08
Total Expenses	\$ 24,943.79
Balances Jul-04	
Investment -On Call	\$ 41,545.16
Current Account	\$ <u>428.13</u>
	\$ 41,973.29

- c. Budget:** The GAC proposed budget has been presented to the Minister together with an estimate of how long it will take the Council to become self-sufficient. This to form the basis of a Cabinet paper to the Minister of Finance. It's important we begin getting processes in place to receive export levies as soon as possible. Don noted that staff will take over some of the duties currently being undertaken voluntarily by Councillors.
- d. Annual Operational Work Plan:** The GAC's AOWP is expected to be signed off in April/May Meeting each year. Geoff Kerr commented that the GAC needs to be careful not to make the AOWP too constraining.

<p>Motion 7/5: Moved Garry Ottmann/Roger Duxfield: The Council approves and ratifies the AOWP and Budget.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED</p>

- 6. DOC Issues:** Ben Reddix discussed his written report that focused largely on some of the more substantial Interactions that had taken place between the Department and the GAC since the last meeting. He spoke about the steps to be taken for 'Regulations for Export Trophy Fees'. He discussed the Cabinet paper regarding our funding which will go to Minister Dunne to advance through Cabinet (it will be from GAC). Concession levies for AATH and NZPHGA were discussed including clarification around the wording activity levies as opposed to trophy fees. Gerald Telford commented that he sees the activity levies and trophy fees as separate items that shouldn't be confused. Roger Duxfield advised that in accordance with Section 64 of the NZPHGA's 10 year contract with DOC, the levy is to be revisited upon formation of the Game Animal Council. Ben advised that a decision had been made regarding whether the Department would transfer concession activity fees to the GAC (this would be advised formally to the GAC). Roger Duxfield said that from the beginning, there existed a clear understanding that the fee would transfer to the GAC and that the Guides would not be subject to a double fee (separate to the AATH fees) to which Gerald Telford agreed.

Ben Reddix drew attention to his report and the key decisions that need to be made about HOSI taking into account the 'overriding considerations' (Appendix 2 of the report). Tahr recovery was also discussed (see Appendix 3 of the report) where a number of aspects around this issue were discussed. Ben led a discussion around issues such as the timing of permit reviews (month of June), communications, hunting guides, recreational hunters and operators. Roger Duxfield acknowledged that the Christchurch DOC office was particularly helpful in getting information and maps out. He noted that communication between DOC and the GAC still has room to improve.

Geoff Kerr responded that DOC were aware from previous years that the subject of issuing permits was highly contentious and particularly around certain times of the year. Don Hammond undertook to write to DOC (through Ben Reddiex) to ask that the GAC be involved in any discussions and/or decisions regarding Game Animals **Action Item 7/4**. Don's correspondence will also cover issues relating to Mike Slater's address to the NZDA Annual Conference and the extent of the Review. In relation to his report, Ben advised that:

- in bullet point 2 under WARO, there had been a reduction in the number of permits issued.
- at the bottom of bullet point 3 under WARO, the review will only focus on the content of the conditions that relate to where WARO activity can occur in the Ruahines (the GAC wants this Review widened and there was considerable discussion about what was promised by Mike Slater in his address to the NZDA Annual Conference) – see Action item 7/4.
- In bullet point 4 under WARO, Ben would like input from the GAC and extensive discussion **Action item 7/5**.

Ben Reddiex commented on the combined Meeting regarding 1080 with Garry Ottmann, Steve McFall, Bill O'Leary, OSPRI etc. The consultative approach worked well and everyone seemed pleased with the detailed reports and maps, however this does not replace consultation that would be undertaken for individual operations as required by SOPs. It was noted that the planned total eradication of TB by 2050 will actually cause more use of 1080 in the near future. GAC needs to consider if we put in a submission on TbFree and OSPRI 30 or 40 Year Plan. The GAC will form a working group comprising Don Hammond, Garry Ottmann, Geoff Kerr and Steve McFall to make a submission on the Tb Strategy **Action item 7/6**.

<p>Motion 7/6: Moved Don Hammond/Alec McIver: That GAC will make a submission on the TbFree/OSPRI 30 or 40 Year Plan.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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Ben Reddiex noted that DOC was providing assistance to the GAC in regards to formalising Alex Gale's contract for the Online Hunter Training Programme. Ben organised an interactive session with Councillors to put forward their ideas on opportunities for "more long term sustainable future for the management of wild animal recovery in NZ" (using the 3 headings of participants (organisations & individuals), risks and opportunities). Ben collected the answers which he will take away and collate. This information will assist DOC in setting up his Terms of Reference for the Review just announced, in bullet point 4 under the WARO Heading.

In a separate discussion it was noted that GAC doesn't condone the illegal release of Sika in Northland recently which is proving to be costly for DOC. The GAC sought confirmation from DOC that this has happened and further information including a possible Press Release encouraging hunters to report sightings **Action item 7/7**.

- 7. Address by Minister Dunne:** The Minister began his address by reiterating some of the points he raised in his address to the NZDA Annual Conference. He acknowledged that a Cabinet paper was being put together to go to the Minister of Finance regarding GAC funding and that it was imperative that we be provided with the necessary resources to fulfil our statutory responsibilities. The Minister said he is pleased that DOC agreed to review its decision on the Ruahines. The Minister is keen to ensure that we don't see the same debate happen every time permits are to be issued. The Minister spoke about the Terms of Reference for Firearms use/ Illegal hunting and safety Review which will be led by the police, some progress is expected in the next few weeks. The Minister is impressed by the dedication of GAC Councillors and has received positive reports and feedbacks on GAC activities and leadership. He commented that hunters are enjoying have some political

representation and he'd had good feedback on his attendance at the NZDA Conference. Good collaboration and a cohesive approach might be better able to address flashpoint issues in future. He was saddened by another recent hunting related death (although this one was possum hunting) and other accidents occurring in the bush. During some question time with the Minister, Bill O'Leary raised the issue of Arms Officers seizing on the Review process to tighten use of Firearms. Lastly the Minister raised anomalies with the Mountain Safety Council noting that it doesn't appear to be accountable to anyone and that it has existed for 45 years on this basis, with no obligation to send its Annual Report to any statutory body. Don thanked the Minister for his attendance and Fraser also for his input and wished him all the best for his travels overseas.

- 8. Address by Gerald Telford, President NZPHGA:** Gerald explained a little bit about the background of the NZPHGA and how fortunate they have been in the past to have informed people working in their organisation. However, they are now finding that the many rules and regulations governing the industry are now catching up with them. Their aim to reduce and mitigate as much conflict as possible.

H&S Manual - All of the 75 commercial tourism operators are business people and the NZPHGA has established a Health and Safety Operating Manual for each guiding operation which satisfies the legal requirement for an Audited Safety plan. They wanted to have standards and regulations ready for the Game Animal Council, written from within the NZPGHA by paid writer, In the next 2 years they will be rewriting their Health & Safety Manual around new safety standards.

Guides Academy Course - 5 Day Residential Course costing \$2200 including membership. The first course ran 2 years ago at Manuka Point and was hosted by Don Paterson. Their Training Manual is aimed at every guide and meets the criteria of industry standards. People who undertake the course assessment are peer reviewed and not ticked off until 100% of standards are met. Being a regulated industry means they can monitor people and businesses that exist and those that enter their organisation. They are very much tied to and committed to the image of the 100% Clean Green NZ. Professional Guides need to be professional in every way and this professional is very reassuring in helping and overseas recreational hunters.

Tourism NZ - NZPHGA has a great relationship with Tourism NZ due to them being the highest net worth industry attract big paying tourists \$45M industry (net worth).

Standards - They work very closely with NZAGE and accept and support their standards and they want every hunting guide and their hunter to use affiliated game estates

Endorsement - Ideally they would like the GAC to 'certify' their approved Hunting Guides and standards and want advice as to how to progress this. They are seeking GAC endorsement because the GAC is a statutory authority. The challenge to the GAC is how we moderate which programmes we endorse, NZDA, NZPGHA, NZAGE etc (all on the go at the moment with more to come). GAC has a mandate within the Act to endorse standards we think meet the requirements. Geoff Kerr reported that he has examined the Academy Course notes has suggested some changes already particularly to do with gender language. We need to set the industry standard and then associations need to tell us how they measure up to those standards. Don Hammond thanked Gerald for his attendance and address to the GAC, noting that the organisation is professional and proactive and it has done well to ensure it is independently audited.

James Guild from the Association of Game Estates will address a future meeting.

9. General Business

- a: Herds of Special Interest:** Mark Brough presented the Working Party's paper on "Criteria and matters to be considered when making or assessing proposals for Herds of Special Interest (HOSI)

and asked that the criteria be formally adopted by Council. We also need to develop a Management Plan or some basis for managing applications if we get a large number all at once and a process for seeking advice from DOC.

<p>Motion 7/7: Moved Mark Brough/Alec McIver: That the GAC adopts the criteria for establishing a Herd of Special Interest.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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The Working Group would like to see a process developed also for assessing herds and inviting interested groups to put forward proposals. Te Ureweras herd could be a herd of considerable interest rather than a Herd of Special Interest however, this raises the question as to whether a change is required to the Act. Part of the GAC Act touches on providing support to private land owners, Te Ureweras also have their own Act of Parliament. Would the GAC have the same powers of enforcement over a herd of considerable interest on private land?

Roy Sloan presented his request for the Wapiti Herd to be a Herd of Special Interest and his Preliminary Assessment of the suitability of the herd to be designated as a HOSI. The Fiordland Wapiti Foundation is currently in partnership with DOC and would like the GAC to be added to this partnership. Roy said that the Wapiti Foundation would pay for a Management plan to be written by professionals and that the herd ticks so many of the GAC criteria boxes because they have been a managed herd for over 10 years already and just waiting for the GAC to come into effect to help manage the people and the herd. They are very keen to take the next step and become a HOSI. A Landcare Report is expected to be finalised on 20 July and will be circulated to Councillors by Roy along with a number of other reports that have been compiled over the years. Geoff Kerr asked if the Economic Report prepared 12 years ago, could be updated. Roy to send reports to Jenny to circulate to Councillors **Action item 7/8**.

Ben Reddix suggested that the GAC should ask the Minister who he sees as having the responsibility for developing Management Plans of Herds of Special Interest taking into account overriding considerations and various Acts of Parliament. The GAC will acknowledge the FWF request Action Item 7/8.

<p>Motion 7/8: Moved Don Hammond/Roger Duxfield: That the GAC encourages the FWF to compile information in preparation for developing a management plan for a HOSI for Wapiti in Fiordland, subject to the Minister's direction.</p>	<p>CARRIED (with one abstention, Roy Sloan)</p>
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b: Sika Show: Mark Brough wants the GAC to have a stand at the Sika Show and engage with the public in a meaningful way. He sought permission to hire a TV to relay relevant pictures and photos and to distribute relevant GAC collateral **Action item 7/9**. The NZPHGA can help with hunting footage.

c: Animal Welfare Act Hunting Provisions: Geoff Kerr and Gerald Telford attended the NAWAC Workshop about hunting and killing animals in their wild state. Geoff was looking to NAWAC for a definition of 'acceptable hunting practice'. At the meeting it was decided that the GAC would convene another meeting, paid for by NAWAC to adopt a description or a statement that best described acceptable hunting practice. GAC to invite stakeholders such as NZDA, NZPHA, NZPHGA, Bowhunters etc with the aim of developing a first draft of a set of guiding principles to take back to the MPI facilitators. One draft set of wording they have already come up with is "Hunters must utilise the equipment and method appropriate to the species being hunted that ensures the quickest, cleanest complete kill possible with the primary intention of minimising prolonged suffering". It was noted that Fish & Game did not attend the NAWAC workshop and that the any "acceptable hunting practice" statement developed by this group would not cover game birds or fish.

d: Firearms and aircraft: Geoff has circulated a draft policy on this issue and proposes to put it up on the website. There were no comments and approval was given for it to go on the website.

10. Working Group Updates/reports:

a: Online Hunting Training update: this has progressed to the point where Terry Pierson is working on the financial implications with legal assistance being provided by DOC on drafting the contract with Alex Gale. Terry Pierson to provide Ben Reddiex with an update and any legal questions.

b: Financial: Terry Pierson has signed off the contract for the GAC to access 'All of Government' consumables The GAC will also reimburse Councillors for parking and mileage at the government approved rate of 77cents per kilometre.

c: Appointment of CEO: Don Hammond provided an update on the appointment of a CEO which has basically stalled pending financial support from the government. A proposed solution is to appoint someone on secondment from a government department.

d: Succession Planning: Bill O'Leary wants to put a succession plan in place for the end of Councillor's three year tenure, whether by group or individual discussion, so that we can see what the future might look like with the next appointment process being only 18 months away.

e: Communications Strategy: Mark wants an agenda item for the next meeting to map out exactly which stakeholder groups the GAC should be consulting and to begin implementing a communications strategy **Action item 7/10.**

f: Website and Weblink policy: Steve McFall advised that the website has relocated to Wellington, that the domain names are up for renewal and following this the webmaster will undertake a full migration which will result in an increase in fees of approximately \$1320 plus GST. Terry will liaise with Amy Adams Department and then follow this up with Ben Reddiex. Steve McFall will present the Weblink Policy at the next meeting. He asked the GAC to consider if we should be using *.govt* rather than *.org* in our email addresses.

11. Next Meeting Planning: Next meeting be held in Rotorua following the Sika Show in Taupo. The meeting will be held on Monday 28 September 2015 with the venue to be advised.

Meeting closed at 4.15pm.