

MINUTES OF THE GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL MEETING 26 NOVEMBER 2018

Held at The Thorndon Hotel, 24 Hawkestone St, Thorndon, Wellington

Present: Don Hammond (Chair), Geoff Kerr, Garry Ottmann, Carol Watson, Alec McIver, Richard Burdon, Rachael Dean, Stephen Hall, Jenny Wotten (Executive Officer).

Also in attendance: Rod Treder (DOC), Michael McIlraith (NZ Police)

Apologies: Minister Eugenie Sage, Mervyn English (DOC), Roger Duxfield.

1. **Welcome, Agenda, Health & Safety:** Don Hammond welcomed Councillors and visitors. Don Hammond gave an overview of the Health & Safety and emergency exits for the venue.
2. **Agenda:** a number of extra items were added to the agenda: verbal update on Kaweka, Kaimanawa operations from Garry Ottmann.

Motion 21/1: Moved Richard Burdon/Carol Watson: that the agenda be confirmed.	CARRIED
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3. **Minutes of previous meeting 23 August 2018:** were taken as read with minor alterations as agreed.

Motion 21/2: Moved Geoff Kerr/Richard Burdon: that the Minutes of the 23 August 2018 Meeting be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.	CARRIED
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4. Matters arising:

- a. **Use of lures: GAC website** – 4a to be updated with message that the GAC does not recommend the use of lures.
- b. **OSPRI** – 4b Several Councillors have communicated with OSPRI. GAC to meet with OSPRI including the new CEO as soon as possible.
- c. **Aerial toxins** – The GAC policy on toxins has been updated and will be posted on the GAC website. The use of deer repellent is only one of a handful of possible mitigations and that timing of drops is equally, if not more important.
- d. **Iwi engagement** – GAC have been in contact with Cam Speedy and provided a link to the Tuhoë page for Councillors to read prior to the meeting. This link to be considered in determining how the Council might be of assistance to promote improved ecological and recreational outcomes in Te Urewera.
- e. **Firearms licence for visitors** – Roger Duxfield reported on his continued work with the NZ Police about the problems experienced by overseas visitors wanting to bring a firearm into NZ as per Action 19/2
- f. **NZBS Code of Ethics** – The revised Bowhunters code was circulated in the Board Papers for endorsement. This is discussed later in the meeting.
- g. **Deer Repellent** - Rod Treder provided an update in his DOC report.
- h. **Engaging with the Hunting Sector** – The Minister had previously asked DOC to head this process and the GAC was to be sent Terms of Reference. This work is now on hold and there is no planned review of the GAC.
- i. **Sika Show 2018 & Shot Show 2019** – The Minister's attendance at the Sika Show on 29 September 2018 was appreciated by both the Council and many hunters. Don Hammond thanked Jenny Wotten for organising the Councillors accommodation etc. GAC confirmed it will attend again in 2019. The Shot Show is on 23 & 24 February 2019 and the GAC plans to have a stand with a GAC Meeting on the following day. Carol Watson to follow up with the organisers of the Shot Show.

- j. **Lincoln university scholarship update** Through Geoff Kerr, Lincoln University has offered a scholarship to identify ways to obtain better information about NZ pig hunters. Completion is planned for February 2019.

Subsequent discussion about how the GAC could encourage more such scholarships with possible joint support from stakeholders such as the NZDA, NZPHA, SCI or through community 'matching fund' grant applications. Geoff Kerr advised that ability to offer such scholarships depends on funding and availability of appropriate supervision. It might also be possible to get some students supported by DOC funding to work on future projects under similar conditions.

It was agreed there is scope for the GAC to potentially sponsor a student each year. **Action item 21/1** Stephen Hall to explore this idea further before the end of the first quarter of 2019. Rachael Dean advised that Rural Women do something similar.

- k. **Parliamentary Hunt** – Garry Ottmann provided an overview of the 2018 Parliamentary Hunt and thanked the Ngamatea Station hosts/owners, various hunting sector assistants who volunteered their time and equipment and other Councillors who helped. The Parliamentary Hunt provides an opportunity for MPs and their families to participate in a hunt, allowing them to better understand the sector and how it operates. It was over-subscribed this year. It is hoped this can be run again sometime in 2019, maybe in the South Island. Garry declared a \$50 Glengarry voucher received by way of appreciation from one of the hunters and advised he will forward it to the landowner as a thank you.

5. **Chair update** – Don Hammond provided a verbal update covering issues such as tahr management, Sika Show & feedback, a positive relationship with the Minister and her acknowledgement of the role the GAC can play. By way of example, the GAC has provided solid and timely advice to the Minister in relation to managing tahr numbers, and use of toxins. The GAC needs to have the conversation with the current government about what, if any, legalities stand in the way of implementing the Trophy Export Levy with particular reference to the trade negotiation situation with the USA.
6. **Correspondence** - Correspondence was presented and discussed. Of note, the GAC has received a request from Mark Ryan, Deputy Director General, CIC - International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation Headquarters to meet with the GAC when he is in New Zealand in 2019.

<p>Motion 21/3: Moved Alec McIver/Stephen Hall: That inward correspondence be accepted and outward correspondence be approved.</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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7. Action items:

- a. **Promotion & sponsorship policy** Action 3/12– will fall into the comms strategy
- b. **HOSI Strategy** Action 10/7 –is on hold at the Minister's request
- c. **NZ Conservation Boards** Action 13/3 – Don Hammond to liaise.
- d. **Access Easements** Action 13/10 (and 17/2) – Geoff Kerr reminded Rod Treder about what still needs to be done regarding access easements. This issue was first raised in December 2016 and awaits some kind of resolution. DOC had previously undertaken to work with the Working Access Commission to put Twizel-office administered easement conditions on the WAMS website but this hasn't happened and the communication has now stalled. The GAC is concerned that with so many differing easement conditions, hunters could potentially be breaking the law without knowing it. **Action item 21/2** Rod Treder to follow up.
- e. **Article about CWD** Action 18/3– Geoff Kerr still to do this.
- f. **Hunting Permit System** Action 18/7 Carol Watson reported on communications with DOC on this subject. Fiona Hall has sent a report to her director and is waiting for a response. Carol has not seen a copy of the report. DOC asked also to investigate opportunity to include firearms licence

numbers & permanent address in permit process to enable valuable data about how many Australian hunters are coming to NZ. Rod Treder to keep the GAC abreast of developments in this space **Action item 21/3**.

- g. **Letter of Expectation response** Action 19/7 – Don Hammond has been in communication with the Minister about this and an extension has been approved - we expect to provide a full response by January 2019.
- h. **Comms Policy** Action 19/8– part of new contractor’s scope of work.
- i. **ZIP** Action 20/2 - The Council continues to work with ZIP to progress this trial and in particular, understand the potential impact on game animals and kea. Don congratulated Geoff Kerr and Garry Ottmann on a successful project and for their ongoing involvement and liaison with ZIP and other stakeholders.
- j. **Aerial Assisted Trophy Hunting (AATH) code** Action 20/3– This code was developed by the GAC and provided to then Minister in 2014. It is Council’s view that it is timely to review this to ensure it is still fit for purpose. Rod Treder had previously undertaken to provide the GAC with the latest draft of this code before it is implemented by the Department on 9 February 2019. Rod advised that Mark Davies has taken over management of that process and Rod has asked him to contact the GAC (Alice Sinclair main DOC person) to ensure we are consulted. Rod undertook to provide a timeline to the GAC for its implementation.
- k. **MSC training for new firearms licences** Action 20/4 — Roger Duxfield (by earlier email), Richard Burdon and Rachael Dean all provided feedback on their investigations into the new procedures.

8. Finance – Council’s financial report was tabled. The new system breaks down expenditure by account code and projects. The Department has been provided with our Cash Flow Forecast.

- a. The GAC Finance Committee Chair has had to step down from the role due to a potential new work related conflict of interest. Stephen Hall has taken over the position. See recommendations in the Finance and Admin Committee Paper. Rachael Dean is able to remain as Chair of an Admin group but can’t have access to any accounts, reports or anything finance related. It was resolved that Stephen Hall would temporarily take up the position of Admin & Finance Chair with Don Hammond and Carol Watson helping out as necessary. Action is to be taken asap to remove Rachael Dean’s access to Xero and the GAC bank accounts **Action item 21/4**.
- b. Request to change auditor - We are waiting for new Councillors to be appointed and we don’t know what skills they may bring with them.

<p>Motion 21/4: Moved Stephen Hall/Don Hammond: That the GAC requests that the Auditor General appoints a new auditor to the Game Animal Council. (Rachael Dean abstained)</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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- c. Other recommendations in the Admin & Finance Committee Report. As the GAC has recently aligned its financial reporting goals with the Department’s goals, the five DOC performance measures which GAC aligns its Goals to should also become the Service Performance Measures that GAC reports in our audited annual accounts. This will mean there will be a year when the comparatives are not precisely aligned however this can be explained in a Note to the Accounts.

- d. New bank signatory – Stephen Hall has agreed to become a signatory on the account.

<p>Motion 21/5: Moved Richard Burdon/Garry Ottmann: That Stephen Hall be added to the list of approved signatories on the GAC bank account. (Rachael Dean abstained)</p>	<p>CARRIED</p>
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- e. It was further recommended that Jenny Wotten be granted a higher level of access to the account – she currently has read only access – to allow her to set up payments.

Motion 21/6: Moved Richard Burdon/Don Hammond: That Jenny Wotten be given the capability to set up payments to be approved within the GAC bank account . (Rachael Dean abstained) CARRIED

- f. Financial delegations – a past audit recommendation has been that the GAC have some financial delegations in place. Further work is required to see this through to fruition, both for implementing financial expenditure delegation limits and for procurement. The delegations would need to be referenced in the contract with the new GAC contractor.
- g. Current status of 2017-18 financial report - the accounts are now with the auditor and all accounting is up to date within Xero.
- h. Administration - Cloud trial for document sharing: this overlaps with the communications and operational bigger picture that is expected to form part of the work of the contractor. The contractor is to explore and come back to the GAC with recommendations bearing in mind sharing guidelines issued by the government.

9. GAC appointments – Councillors Carol Watson, Geoff Kerr, Garry Ottmann, Roger Duxfield and Alec Mclver appointments are due to expire on 30 November 2018. At this time there is no indication of when new councillors will be appointed and until that time the sitting Councillors remain in office. The GAC positions were advertised in August 2018, with a closing date for applications of 24 September.

10. Tahr Control – See Geoff Kerr’s report (**Attachment A**). Council has been working with the Department to coordinate a reduction of tahr numbers while mitigating the impacts this reduction might have on the hunting sector. Further meetings are already planned for January 2019. While the focus is currently on reducing numbers, we must also look further ahead to better understand the population and impacts it may have and how this can be best managed in the longer term. One challenge that remains is how best to record the contribution unaffiliated recreational hunters make to the reduction in animal numbers.

To maintain future hunting opportunities it is important to ensure that, as far as possible, bull tahr are not culled. The GAC has already begun work under permit from the Department to determine the potential to hold bull tahr in captivity outside the feral range in order to reduce conflict between commercial hunters and recreational users of PCL.

Council noted with respect, the loss of pilot Nick Wallis and DOC staff Paul Hondelink and Scott Theobald. This tragedy has impacted the planned reduction in tahr numbers and Council will continue to work with DOC and other stakeholders to assist with revising the operational plan to ensure necessary work continues.

The GAC has also offered to assist the Department with an update of the 1993 Himalayan Tahr Control Plan, which is now over 25 years old and has never been reviewed. While at a high level the Plan is reasonably sound, a lot has changed since 1993 and requires consideration. The GAC will offer to work closely with the Department and stakeholders on this.

The GAC believes the TLG can provide valuable guidance on the framework for monitoring HTCP implementation, setting the scientific agenda (including social science), identifying critical issues for short-term tahr management, and providing guidance on appropriateness and parameters for HTCP revision.

Geoff Kerr recognized the huge amount of work and hours Garry Ottmann has put into this body of work, managing relationships and forging a single sector response despite some fairly entrenched views. Garry Ottmann praised Geoff Kerr’s superior knowledge of tahr populations and tahr behaviour and his ability to use scientific evidence to convince others about effective methods to

manage the tahr population. Don Hammond expressed his gratitude to both Garry Ottmann and Geoff Kerr for their wise advice and counsel and the vast number of voluntary hours they have both put in so far. The GAC's role was recently mentioned by the Minister in a letter to NZDA where she acknowledges the work of the GAC collaborating with stakeholders on a range of matters important to game management and conservation and that the GAC played a useful role in achieving an adaptive plan for controlling the population of Himalayan tahr in the South Island.

11.DOC update- Rod Treder provided a DOC update, (**Attachment B**) and reported on the ongoing good working relationship between the GAC and the Department. From a GAC perspective, relevant workstreams include streamlining access to PCL following tenure review decisions, new fire regulations as they affect hunters (and the public) using PCL, the Battle for our Birds Programme, especially in view of the likely scale of this in the next 12-18 months and various National Park plans, Regional Plans and Conservation plans as they work through the statutory processes. Comments and discussion about the DOC report included:

- a. **WARO** - Rod summarised the WARO national permit situation as per his report: no specific date was given regarding timing but but presumably it will take place in the first quarter of 2019.
- b. **1080 Matters** – A number of aerial operations did not go ahead because pest densities didn't meet anticipated operational trigger levels. Councillors commented on what they had heard within their own hunting circles including a new groundswell of awareness of the environment, sustainability etc and volunteers & hunter's willingness to participate and lay bait stations in accessible areas as an alternative. The GAC does not support the radical anti 1080 groups that have threatened DOC staff and the Minister and Don Hammond has mentioned this to the Minister on several occasions. The GAC will continue to follow the development of deer repellent and alternatives to 1080 closely with a view to ensuring continued access to this important tool, and encourages DOC to ensure this happens as quickly as possible.
- c. **Deer repellent** – there was a discussion about the technical pre screening phase of the application process and the length of time that takes. Rod Treder will clarify whether the registration applications have been filed yet. The GAC is interested to know if DOC has a Plan B as there is a massive Beech Mast expected to occur before the deer repellent bait manufacturers obtain EPA approval.
- d. **Predator Free 2050 and BFOBs** – see report.
- e. **Whitetail deer herd** – Geoff Kerr has had some conversations with the Otago Conservation Board about the Whitetail Deer Herd. The herd is of minor importance to the Conservation Board but very important to locals.
- f. **New DOC fire control policy** – DOC has finalised its new National Policy for Fire Control Operations which is scheduled for implementation in December. The policy covers issues such as cooking and warming fires within one hour's walk of vehicle access, without permits. The GAC has previously raised concerns about how hunters will be informed of the policy to avoid them inadvertently breaking the law. The GAC will work with DOC and FENZ to assist the communication on the policy, its implications for hunters and how GAC can help distribute this information to stakeholders. Rod Treder will let the GAC know when we can look at their draft document and have input. **Action item 21/5** DOC are waiting for the new regulations to come into effect.
- g. **Game Animal Council nominations** – Don Hammond and Rod Treder have been involved in discussions with Mervyn English and the Minister and expect information about new Councillors will be announced in February 2019.
- h. **AATH** – Brief discussion about AATH and how the "Offsets" (AATH operators are to shoot 5 nannies for every bull shot by clients, which are termed offsets) are being recorded as part of the overall Tahr cull. Rod Treder agreed to write to the GAC after the meeting and provide an update on AATH.
- i. **Export permits** – The removal of export permits provisions has reduced the ability to understand the number of trophies exported and hence the importance of this sector to hunting contribution. The GAC is working to determine how this deficiency can be overcome. Richard Burdon suggests

that people should be able to print off form and write their name and species so we can record what is being exported out of the country and which country they are taking the trophy to. See Richard Burdon's paper on this. Rod Treder and Richard Burdon to liaise further on this.

12. Mike McIlraith, Officer in Charge, Arms Act Service Delivery Group - Don Hammond welcomed Mike McIlraith. Roger Duxfield and Don Hammond had previously met with Mike in Rotorua in mid 2018 and invited him to make a presentation to the full Council in relation to the new Firearms Safety Programme. Richard Burdon advised that the NZPHGA might be interested in undertaking a survey of its members to ascertain their thoughts on how the system is going.

Mike McIlraith gave some background going back to June 2018 when he and his team met with over 200 police staff and 500 firearms community members, including the GAC and firearms dealers, across 16 locations as part of a Roadshow to gather feedback and insights on current processes and to identify key areas that needed improvement. Consistency in how the Arms Act processes are administered (clarity and consistency in the interpretation of the Arms Act across districts) was a top issue along with better and more frequent communication and engagement between Police and the firearms community. There was also a big call for more online services, including licence applications and payments, to meet the changing needs of the community but also for retaining paper-based application options.

Since then, the team has focussed on identifying technical solutions to facilitate streamlined and automated firearms administration and having further meetings around the country to get feedback on the redesigned application process. In October they met with over 300 firearms users in 6 locations, including firearms dealers, to test the new process and received mostly positive feedback. They have partnered with the NZ Transport Agency, the Automobile Association (AA), and Vehicle Testing New Zealand (VTNZ) to provide the theory testing component. Specific details and the application process can be accessed via the Police website. New Regulations needed to enable the electronic systems are in the process of being drafted.

Mike McIlraith advised that almost 1100 people have participated in the new theory component of the Firearms Safety Course administered by the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council (MSC), and about 650 have participated in the practical component, with about a 74% pass rate. It is expected that applicants will soon be able to book their theory test and practical training together as one session, meaning that applicants won't have to make two trips anymore. The Police also received feedback that additional training locations are needed across the country and have taken that on board with 66 new locations progressively coming on line in 2019. Rachael Dean advised Police have also met with the Rural Women's Association who have shared their concerns about increasing training availability in rural locations also.

Police have also been working with the Firearms Community Advisory Forum (FCAF) to develop guidance for firearms storage and received 36 submissions from a mixture of professional organisations and individuals in the second round of consultations. Submissions included concerns around the current wording, guidelines for safes, use of bars & grills on windows and a suggestion to introduce personal firearms logbooks for individual firearms users.

A question was raised about people who want to use a firearm but don't own one. Mike's response was that they don't have a licence and therefore should not be using a gun. Mike is keen to seek the GAC support the new Firearms Safety Program and for us to convey this to our stakeholders and work with organisations like Federated Farmers and MSC to promote awareness of the new processes. If there are particular messages the GAC wants to share as part of its mandate to promote safety

initiatives for the hunting sector, including firearms safety, then we should ask the Police to put a link on their page. Mike undertook to send the GAC a list of the new training locations.

The Police are pleased with how the 2 year trial with MSC is progressing well and they will continue to offer practical training sessions across the country. Uptake figures are bit distorted as a result of a large number of hunters who got in just before the new process came into place which affected the expected uptake. There was also discussion about visitors to NZ with firearms needing to nominate their safe storage location prior to admission. This will have significant impacts for non-guided hunters. Much self-guided foreign hunting could become impossible under this new regime.

Don Hammond thanked Mike McIlraith for his time and informative presentation which provides reassurance and confidence that the course is meeting hunter's needs. **Action item 21/6** Don to write to Mike McIlraith giving GAC support of the process and outlining any ways the GAC can be involved or assist with dissemination of information. Councillors have had mixed feedback on the success of the program so far. Shared comments included:

- young people have said they are enjoying the hands-on component
- it is working well in the city, but concerns remain about availability in rural towns
- issues to do with computer literacy and computer availability
- need to ensure training is available at the grass roots level where some hunters are shooting daily to provide food for their families
- how do we capture the rural and remote area people who haven't participated or who might be disenfranchised
- questions about how the process is being run, monitored and audited (or assessed mid-term) as this would highlight deficiencies
- what transitional arrangements are being made for firearms licence applicants who have undertaken previous training prior to the new process.

Don Hammond pointed out that game animal numbers are on the rise in some locations (including pigs, tahr and deer) and recreational hunters provide a solution to that problem. Richard Burdon & Roger Duxfield have prepared a draft notice to go on the GAC website and are awaiting Councillor's feedback on this. Social media was highlighted as a good forum for disseminating this type of information quickly but the GAC doesn't have a social media platform at present. This could be included in the GAC's future communications strategy.

13.Engagement of Contractor for the provision of services to the GAC – Councillors Geoff Kerr and Garry Ottmann were asked to leave the room for the duration of this discussion.

Motion 21/7: Moved Don Hammond/Rachael Dean: That the meeting move into Committee.

CARRIED

- a. Council agreed to the recommendation of the RFP Selection Panel to enter into a contract with Fish and Wildlife Ltd & Partners to provide services as outlined in the RFP document.
- b. It is important to note that two of the members of Fish and Wildlife Ltd & Partners are current Councillors of the GAC (Ottmann & Kerr). To manage any real or perceived conflicts of interest the following measures have been undertaken:
 - Whilst Councillors these members took no part in any decisions regarding the development of the RFP or any of the evaluation process, they also both declared a conflict of interest in this matter and took no part in the selection of the preferred contractor as recorded in these minutes;

- Both individuals will resign their positions as Councillors at the expiration of their term (when new Councillors are appointed).
 - No financial advantage was provided to these individuals connected to this contract before their resignation as Councillors.
- c. Agree to the Chairman signing the contract for service.

Motion 21/8: Moved Stephen Hall/Richard Burdon: That the Council enters into a contract with Fish and Wildlife Ltd & Partners to provide services as outlined in the RFP document. Ottmann and Kerr were not present for this motion. CARRIED

Motion 21/9: Moved Don Hammond/Rachael Dean: That the meeting move out of Committee. CARRIED

14.Sub Committee Working Group reports - all reports were taken as read.

- a. **ZIP trial, Perth River** – as noted in Geoff Kerr’s report, animal ethics approval for this project originally expired in November 2018 but has now been extended for a year. Geoff is the principal named on the Animal Research Ethics approval, which must remain with a Lincoln University staff member. Consequently, he will need to remain in control of this operation on behalf of the GAC, which he has agreed to do. The 2019 Adams Wilderness tahr ballot will be affected. GAC is monitoring proposed mitigation. Don Hammond encouraged Rod Treder to go and see the project first hand.
- b. **Ruahine Deer Management Working Group** - Geoff Kerr has been the GAC representative on this working group to-date. After discussion it was agreed that Geoff would remain as our representative after his term on Council finishes, for as long as he is available to do it.
- c. **New Zealand Bowhunters Society Code of Ethics** – See Carol Watson’s report (**Attachment C**). Carol Watson led a discussion about minor changes to the bowhunter’s Code of Ethics and Rules of Fair Chase. The GAC is keen to endorse the bowhunters’s code and has endorsed at least one code every year since the decision was adopted. Carol will circulate the document for consideration by councillors following the GAC Meeting, noting Councillor’s comments that:
 - the Rules of Fair Chase don’t need to be endorsed as those rules related specifically and only to members recordings kills with the NZBS.
- d. **Tahr on Game Estates** – Garry Ottmann and Geoff Kerr will continue working on this project.

15.General Business

- a. **Tuhoe & Te Urewera** - Alec McIver talked about the rapid rise of pig and deer numbers in Te Urewera. Tuhoe have raised the idea of a managed herd to cater for local families wanting to put food on the table. Tuhoe have begun conversations with a number of special interest groups, including the Game Animal Council, who share their vision. The new contractor will pick this project up and start a formal engagement process. Farming of Rusa deer has also been suggested and this approach has apparently worked well in Australia. Alec McIver has been approached to work with Tuhoe and will continue to do so once his term with the GAC expires.
- b. **Kaweka Beech Report** – Garry Ottmann recapped a meeting that took place in Napier last week. Meeting attendees want to develop a 10 year strategy in consultation with the GAC and ensure the local hunting community is on board. Things had been progressing well with input from the Sika Foundation and with the benefit of Geoff Kerr’s scientific approach.

The Kaweka Liaison Group (KLG) has raised concerns about methodology and interpretation of a recent Kaweka Forest Park Mountain Beech Project assessment report written by New Zealand Forest Surveys. This is a follow up report by the same author who wrote a report on the area in 2003.

The report was commissioned without consulting the KLG and they are extremely disappointed that the non-peer reviewed draft report was sent to the Conservation Board and that was the catalyst for the Board withdrawing their support for the Sika HOSI. The KLG raises a number of important concerns about the process for commissioning the report, the quality of science, recommendations that go beyond the evidence and are outside the terms of reference, and about the report's distribution and ultimate interpretation by policy makers.

The KLG want the report to be revoked, or at least peer reviewed by suitably qualified scientists.

There is a danger that many years of relationship building in managing Kaweka deer could be lost and decisions could be made on the basis of faulty science. The GAC has a role to work with the Department and all hunting sector interests in situations such as this where conflict arises. The Department and the hunting sector have put considerable goodwill and resources into achieving positive outcomes through the Kaweka Mountain Beech Project and we want to ensure that those gains remain in place. The GAC supports the call for peer review and discourages use of study results and recommendations until that review is complete.

- c. Don made a presentation to retiring Councillors Alec McIver and Garry Ottmann with the remaining Councillors to have presentations at a later date.
- d. Rod Treder undertook to put Carol Watson in touch with the relevant DOC staff member to talk about bowhunting in the Cole Valley and problems she has encountered.

Next meeting 25 February 2019 in Auckland following the Shot Show.

Meeting closed 5pm.

NZ Game Animal Council

COUNCIL PAPER



DATE:	18 November 2018	FROM:	Geoff Kerr
TOPIC	Activity update		
PURPOSE	Information & Discussion		
RECOMMENDATION	Accept		

Tahr Management

- Garry Ottmann and Geoff Kerr represented the GAC at the 29th August 2018 meeting of the reconstituted Tahr Liaison Group.
 - DOC obtained feedback from hunting sector and other groups prior to developing a plan for tahr population reduction.
- DOC subsequently released an operational plan to kill 17,500 tahr (10,000 culled by DOC, 7,500 by the hunting sector) plus all the tahr in Westland/Tai Poutini and Aoraki/Mt Cook national parks.
 - The proposal included culling bulls.
 - The scale and timing of the proposed cull meant that hunting guides would not be able to meet their contracted obligations for the coming season.
 - Because it did not identify operational areas or times, the proposed operational plan created a number of conflicts between hunting sector groups and between hunters and DOC's culling operations.
 - There was a high level of public and political protest against the proposed operational plan, including threats of a legal challenge and actions to prevent DOC obtaining ammunition.
- The GAC developed an alternative draft operational plan for discussion. The GAC's plan was designed to mitigate adverse effects on the hunting sector while significantly reducing tahr numbers.
- Don Hammond, Garry Ottmann and Geoff Kerr attended the 1st October 2018 meeting of the Tahr Liaison Group, which was also attended by the Minister of Conservation. The meeting was strongly supportive of the draft GAC operational plan. DOC undertook to develop a revised operational plan that would address, as far as possible, the points raised at the meeting.
- DOC released a revised operational plan on the 15th October (although it was dated 12th October). There was close consultation with the hunting sector, largely through the GAC, during development of this revised operational plan. Consultation resulted in significant modifications designed to enhance effectiveness and to mitigate adverse effects. The revised operational plan attained endorsement from across the hunting sector.
- A significant by-product of this plan development process was greatly increased mutual understanding of other hunting sector activities and interests, and a high level of mutual support and collaboration across the hunting sector. This cohesiveness will provide a strong foundation for future collaborative game management.

- The first day of DOC's tahr cull operations was 18th October 2018. Sadly, the crash of a helicopter about to commence culling operations that morning resulted in the deaths of pilot Nick Wallis and DOC staff Paul Hondelink and Scott Theobald.
- DOC immediately cancelled all their cull operations. Culling will not recommence until 2019.
- DOC is reviewing its culling procedures prior to cull commencement.
- A revised, but not yet designed, operational plan will cover tahr control until August 2019. The GAC will be closely involved with the new plan development.
- DOC, with GAC assistance, is investigating how to record recreational tahr kills reliably.
- The GAC is working with hunting sector groups and DOC to enhance aerial access for recreational hunters.
- The Himalayan Tahr Control Plan, implemented in 1993, called for research on tahr and their impacts. There has been extremely limited research on these matters. The operational plan recognised the need to address that. The GAC will continue to assist DOC's development of an appropriate research strategy.
- The next Tahr Liaison Group meeting is early December 2019. Garry Ottmann and Geoff Kerr have represented the GAC on the TLG but will no longer be GAC councillors at that point. As a matter of urgency, the Council needs to make provision for continued representation on the TLG.

NZ Conservation Authority

The NZCA maintains close interest in tahr management. The minutes of the 30/31 August 2018 NZCA meeting note:

Agenda Item 24: 2017-2020 Operational Thar Management Plan

DOC have stepped up their efforts and admitted their failings which is great. Confusingly, the Operational Plan is dated 1 July 2017 – 30 June 2020 but some of the data was out of date when it was produced, i.e. the map on page 6 is dated August 2016. The Authority discussed the lack of a detailed timeline and interim milestones, and will request this from DOC with an updated tactical plan, ultimately requiring numbers to get back to 10,000 by 30 June 2020.

Action: The Authority to request from DOC a detailed timeline of tahr management actions, interim milestones and an updated tactical plan to present at the December meeting.

Conservation Management Strategies.

- The Wellington CMS was on the agenda for NZCA sign-off at their October 2018 meeting. I do not know whether that occurred.
- Notification of the East Coast/Hawkes Bay CMS is scheduled for mid-2019.
- Bay of Plenty CMS drafting underway.

National Park management plans.

- Aoraki/Mt Cook and Westland/Tai Poutini National Parks: Submissions on the draft plans are due by 4th February 2019.
- Fiordland & Mt Aspiring National Parks: Consultation with iwi is underway to decide how to proceed. There are two matters that will be of particular interest to the GAC:
 - Continuation of the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation's management of deer in the Wapiti Area.
 - The future of the Whakatipu white-tailed deer herd.

Department of Conservation easements:

- No progress.

Department of Conservation Aerial 1080 mitigation

- DOC staff, Bill O'Leary & I met with NZDA presidents at the Taupo prior to the Sika Show to explain the consultative process we have engaged in and to preview upcoming operations.
- Predictions remain on track for a massive beech mast for 2019, particularly for the south west of the South Island. Identification of operational areas will occur as tracking information becomes available after the mast.

ZIP trial, Perth River, South Westland

- Postponed until 2019 because of adverse weather.
- Animal ethics approval originally expired in November 2018. It has been extended for one year. Juvenile collared tahr will be monitored in early 2019 to ensure their growth has not made the collars overly tight. If they are, the tahr will be euthanised and the collars redeployed.
- I am the principal named on the Animal Research Ethics approval, which must remain with a Lincoln University staff member. Consequently, I will need to remain in control of this operation on behalf of the GAC, which I am extremely willing to do.
- The 2019 Adams Wilderness tahr ballot will be affected. GAC is monitoring proposed mitigation.

Ruahine Deer Management Working Group

- I was unable to attend the September meeting of the Group because I was abroad.
- DOC cancelled the November meeting because of DOC staff redeployments subsequent to the fatal October helicopter crash.
- The GAC should appoint a new representative to this group.

DOC Report – GAC Meeting, 26 November 2018**WARO permitting 2019**

There will be a second round of (targeted) WARO consultation – we are going back to stakeholders who participated in the June/July round of consultation to give them an opportunity to provide further feedback where there is a proposed change at place from the June/July recommendation.

That will commence before the end of November 2018. The Council will receive a communication for DOC on the process shortly.

A decision on the terms of the new national WARO permit will now be made in 2019. The interim WARO permits allow continuity of operations until the new national WARO permits are issued.

1080 matters

The anti-1080 sentiment in some sectors of NZ society seems to have reached new levels and DOC considers that it is now in a new operating environment. That new environment needs a different type of management than in the past – which was predominantly critical incident management as the need arose.

This means addresses the issues two ways:

- Threats and harassment management – including intelligence and response, security, staff wellbeing and safety; and
- Public engagement around use of 1080 and its impact on the environment

DOC has commenced working with stakeholders towards an integrated national communications campaign, to ensure that we have consistent messaging, up-to-date factual information.

This will need an agreed framework the communications to be shared across collaborating organisations, so that we can extend the combined reach through our respective channels and networks.

Nic John is leading the work required to establish the framework and messaging.

Deer repellent

Both 1080 bait manufacturers (PCR in Christchurch and Orillion in Whanganui) are continuing to work with the Ministry of Primary Industries to obtain registration of their new deer repellent 1080 baits. This is a requirement under New Zealand law for any new toxic bait formulation prior to its commercial use.

The process of obtaining registration as an approved Animal Control or Veterinary Medicine is very thorough, so consequently is very slow.

Both companies' applications are at the "technical pre-screening" phase of the application process. It is still expected that it will take at least 6 months, and more probably 12 before the registration process is complete.

Predator Free 2050 and Battle for our Birds

Predator Free 2050 Limited has invested in 5 regional predator free projects: in Taranaki, Hawkes Bay, Wellington, Dunedin and Waiheke Island. Those projects represent 254,000 hectares under 'suppression to eradication' projects via PF 2050 Ltd and its partners.

DOC has also recently entered into an agreement with NEXT Foundation for biodiversity protection and transformation in the Upper Mackenzie basin and Aoraki / Mt Cook National Park. This project in (Te Manahuna Aoraki) aims to create a 310,000 hectare predator free mainland island.

Planning is continuing for the 2019/20 predator control programme. Observations from across the country are confirming that a very significant mast event is occurring in both islands. We are continuing to consult with affected stakeholders and monitoring rodent levels before confirming the final programme in early to mid-2019.

The proposed programme is essentially the same as was shared at the August GAC meeting.

There has been one change; the Abbey Rocks (Southern Westland) aerial 1080 operation planned for November 2018 has just been postponed until Spring 2019. The operation was postponed due to staff overload following the recent tragedy in Wanaka and the last West Coast storm event.

Whitetail deer herd

Meeting of the Otago Conservation Board (OCB) last Monday provided an opportunity for interested parties to give their views on the future of the whitetail deer herds – in light of an upcoming review of the Mount Aspiring National Park management plan.

John Roberts from DOC outlined the statutory position only. DOC has no position yet on what future control or management of the herd should be included in the park management plan

Legal hunting access to the conservation land where the herd is most populous is restricted by three farms adjoining the park. As no hunting licences are issued for the area, the risk to the viability of the herd is not expected to increase directly from any change to the management plan.

Some media coverage of the discussion at the OCB is likely, in either the Otago Daily Times or Mountain Scene.

Tahr control

The 2018-19 tactical work for tahr control was put on hold following the fatal helicopter crash in Wanaka.

DOC fire policy

The new FENZ Regulations are going to be in-force on 13 December. DOC already has done some changes to its website (see www.doc.govt.nz/fire). The information on that page is new with the exception of the “related links” at the bottom of the page which refer back to recreation pages.

There is still information to add and correct on other pages. In addition, changes will be made shortly to add the new DOC Fire policy (as provide for by the new FENZ regulations).

Ian Imrie (DOC National Fire Advisor) is the contact for any coordination of comms that might be needed.

Game Animal Council nominations

Mervyn to provide a verbal update at the meeting.

Rod Treder et al

DOC November 2018

ATTACHMENT C**NZ Game Animal Council****COUNCIL PAPER**

DATE:	24 September 2018	FROM:	Carol Watson
TOPIC	NZBS Code of Ethics		
PURPOSE	NZBS is seeking the GAC's endorsement of these documents		
RECOMMENDATION	That the GAC endorse the NZBS Code of Ethics		

The NZBS Committee have reviewed these two documents and both have been revised to ensure rules are specific and unambiguous using inclusive and non-gender specific language. Changes have been highlighted in red.

Rules of Fair Chase

Regarding this clause:

11. *Game must not be taken under any other condition considered by the committee to be unsportsmanlike.*

Geoff your comment on this was: How do the hunters know what is going through the Committee's mind? Which committee? Can the committee come to a decision on this after the fact? If so, then how is the hunter supposed to anticipate what they will decide? If not, then put it in this document so everyone knows what's going on. Has this ever been enacted by the committee, if not can this be omitted? The committee are not keen to remove this from these rules which are more about the eligibility to claim game for awards. In that regard this document is more specific to members rather than the wider bowhunting community. They are keen to have the ability to consider issues they have not anticipated under this clause.

Code of Ethics

This rule has been moved from the Rules of Fair Chase which relate specifically to criteria for claiming game with the Society. It has been reworded to include the mother as well as the reliant juvenile.

1. *Young animals still reliant on their mothers are not to be taken, nor the mother if accompanied by her young.*