Taupō Fishery Advisory Committee

Meeting minutes – 11 April 2024, 5.30pm
Committee Room, DOC Office Turangi.

Members Present:	Julian Proctor - JP	TALTAC- *Chairperson*
	Debby Oakley - DO	Fish & Game (National Council)
	Matt Osborne - MO	Fish & Game (Eastern Operations)
	Mike Fransham - MF	Tongariro National Trout Centre Society
	Richard Kemp - RK	Advocates for the Tongariro River Inc.
	Russell Graham - RG	Taupō Fishing Club
	Roy Coulsen - RC	Taupō Fishing Club
	Shirley Fraser - SF	Waitahanui Angling Improvement Assoc. Inc.
	Bob Crampton - BC	Motuoapa Fishing and Boating Club.
Taupō Fishery:	Dave Conley - DC	DOC – Operations Manager, Taupō fishery
	James Barnett - JB	DOC – Community/Communications
	Mark Venman - MV	DOC – Technical/Operations
	Daniella Bidois - DB	DOC – Business Support (minutes)
Apologies:	Ian Rodger	National Angling Interests - NZFFA
Absent:	Representative	Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board
	Dave Wood	NZ Professional Fishing Guides Assoc.
	Simon Jolly	Taupō Commercial Launchmen's Assoc.

1. Welcome and start.

- Meeting started at 5.30pm.

2. Apologies.

- Noted.

3. Minutes of previous meeting.

- Accepted.

4. Matters arising.

- Nothing noted.

5. Correspondence in and out.

- Nothing noted.

6. DOC Fishery Management Team Updates:

- **a – Operations Managers' report.**
  - Tabled and content noted.

- **b - Licence sales figures.**
  - Chair noted, licence sales values missing from agenda. DC provided a verbal update to the committee. One-off financial administrative issue linked to pre-season licence sales caused the figures to appear worse than they are. Sales are currently tracking slightly up on last season, so comfortable with income. Financial issue will be resolved, addressing the current shortfall.

- **c - Communications Update.**
  - Tabled and content noted.

- **d - Technical Update.**
  - Tabled and content noted.
  - MV – Echo sounding data from November showed Lake Taupō was quite productive, particularly at the Southern end. Intend to repeat the work again next week to capture post-summer/early winter information. Maiden fish are in very good condition. Recovering fish are also looking good.
  - JP - Can report be sent out to TFAC committee members when available.

- RG - Some recovering fish have been very skinny. MV – described how the survey information confirmed a proportion of recovering fish were in poor condition but high numbers of these fish were removed from the system by anglers, which is a good thing for the fishery.
- Discussion revolved around flood events this year and the impact on recovering fish – flushing out of the rivers into the lake.

Action – circulate Lake Productivity report when available.

- **e - Operations Update.**
  - Staff member on leave.

- **- Budget cuts and impact on the Taupō trout fishery.**
  - Before moving on to other agenda items, DC outlined the impact of budget cuts which were recently covered in the media.
  - Front line delivery staff have not been impacted but significant number of roles have been impacted. Fishery finances are ringfenced, as we are angler funded not core crown revenue. No impact at local level other than impacts in business planning and accounting/reporting. Work that was done by these individuals will flow down to remaining staff.
  - 6.5% budget cuts must be held into the future. Looking ahead, a delivery aspect of DOC work will be impacted - expect to have another set of changes happening in a year.
  - DC is now performing dual roles, both Central Plateau Operations Manager and Taupō Fishery Operations Manager, following retirement of Dave Lumley.
  - Fisheries/Operations accounts are separated, so there won't be a financial impact on Fisheries budgets due to Dave Conley wearing both hats.

7. <u>Agenda items:</u>

- **a – Update on the Anglers Notice.**
  - Taken as read – Committee members already participated in the process and approved suggested changes.

- **b – Gold Clam incursion control.**
  - Following the incursion discovered at the Taupō Aquapark, a lot of monitoring work and delimiting work has been carried out. There doesn't appear to be any further spread.

- It appears the clams have been present for 2-3 years within the confines of the park.
- Water enters the park via ground water and doesn't appear to discharge into the other waterways, with no natural outlet to the Waikato River.
- Treatment could possibly involve adding salt to the pond to a predetermined concentration and duration, to clean up the site.
- Incursion could have arrived in the Park when it was used for wakeboarding, with visitors bringing gear in from other areas.

- **c –Tongariro River tracks.**
  - Blackberry have come across the track making angler access more difficult, of note the 3rd and 4th tracks at the bottom of the Major Jones Pool. A few other places where it is becoming difficult such as the left bank of the Lower Bridge Pool.
  - It's been a challenging season for blackberry growth. The intention is to hit the tracks hard, to coincide with the first frosts, which will maintain access for the winter season.
  - The Tongariro Advocates has been working for some time to create view shafts at locations on the Tongariro River. Some very positive results recently, with support from Sarah Tunnicliffe Biodiversity Ranger DOC who provided a summary of works. Jointly control plant pests along the river and help create view shafts.
  - Advocates meeting with Waikato Regional Council was frustrating. Little achieved in the last three years, their focus is only on flood prevention works. Challenging getting agreements from owners of the riverbed. Opportunity to highlight the importance of the Tongariro River as a fishery of international value to increase priority of remedial work.
  - Willows getting worse and worse on the Tongariro River causing issues with angler access and flood protection. A Willow Control Project on a higher section of the river has landowner agreement and is looking at a suitable contractor. Plan to start work in spring, focusing initially on river margins and angler access.
  - New track Advocates have funded, runs over Downs property and heads up towards Old Delatour's Reach. It goes to downstream of Smallman's. True left side of river – accessed from Awamate Road off Hirangi Road. Good if we could extend track to Asian Pool. Need a car park there. TALTAC has advised they might be able to contribute to the cost. The car park would be on LINZ land.

- **d – Motuoapa fishing competition.**
  - BC - Thanks to DOC staff, in particular Brenda Lawson for supporting the competition over the ANZAC weekend with CCD and gold clam information. Fishing was generally hard.
  - TT River mouth night fishing has been good with large rainbows and browns in good condition. Other locations such as the Tongariro River fishing has been tough.

8. Verbal reports:

- **TALTAC**
  - JP -TALTAC AGM last weekend Feb, the fishing comp was possibly worst experienced, with 5 fish caught in total, 4 of which were caught in the dark.
  - A lot of new members joining, with over 600 paying members now. Members like to come for peak periods such as winter fishing.

- **Taupo Fishing Club**
  - RG - New committee members have refreshed aspects of the club, such as Facebook and website, broadening our reach.
  - Membership static at present, struggle to find committee members but hopeful our new website will stimulate more interest.
  - Organised another successful club fishing trip. Good trip but quality of fishing reinforced how good Taupo is.
  - Fishing top end of lake improved, more fish around with some good browns.

- **Waitahanui Anglers Improvement Assoc.**
  - SF welcomed new DOC Fishery Ranger Waaka Wall, he is full of energy and whakapapa's to our awa.
  - We are taking part in the DNA fin collection, samples given to DOC. Georgia, the scientist working on this project gave an informal talk to several members of the Assoc.
  - Thanks for putting steps on the Cliff Pool bridge.
  - Concerns from public re barriers at top of Cliff Pool. Discussion around personal responsibility when venturing into the outdoors, risk profiles, risk assessments and DOC policy, which should be applied consistently. Track users have a level of responsibility to manage themselves. When you enter nature, it comes with a level of risk. DOC will review the location and risks.

- There are abandoned cars on the track that goes down to Williams. DOC will talk to Ngahere.
- Spinning and signage is still an issue. Described an encounter with a visiting angler and the value of clear signage. DOC has funding that should help cover off this issue.

- **Tongariro River Advocates**
  - Nothing to add beyond the previous information shared with the committee.

- **Motuoapa Boating and Fishing Club**
  - Nothing further to add.

- **Tongariro National Trout Centre Soc.**
  - MF – Circulated a short update to the committee. Want to highlight the launch of the Aquaponics, part of the freshwater ecology education programme. Also, Freshwater Expo in association with Environment Waikato, Genesis, NIWA, Project Tongariro, Kids Greening Taupo, DOC.
  - Waiting for the TMTB as part of the Treaty Settlement, which could have positive outcomes at the site.
  - Could also do with more members. We are looking at financial squeeze, number of local people visiting the TNTC spending is impacted. Most bookings for the kids fishing programme are now prebooked from website.

- **National Angler Interests - NZFFA**
  - Ian forwarded his apologies, nothing to add.

- **Fish & Game NZ –**

  National Council
  - DO - Working with Minister for Hunting and Fishing. We need to make savings as an organisation to avoid licence fee increases.
  - F&G meet with the Minister every two weeks to discuss how fishing licence money is being spent. Ensure good value for money and effective management of habitat and resources. We want to ensure we have a say in our future, so taking a pro-active position.
  - SF – Good support for women anglers, with regular workshops. Brief discussion about national support for women and how Taupō fishing club has done a leading job.

- Rewilding campaign aimed at getting people outdoors, enjoying hunting and fishing, and understanding how to prepare for cooking.

Eastern Region

- MO – Finished summer creel surveys, included 917 anglers.
- Completing autumn liberations on Lake Rotoiti and Lake Tarawera.
- Hatchery team getting ready for brood fish coming in. Had early runs of fish through Tarawera, fish looking good so far, so we have lifted criteria by about 3cms this year.
- Returned acoustic gear to DOC. We had interesting results following analysis by Michel. Tarawera acts different to Taupo, we have a very productive period in the pre turn over autumn time lots of smelt, spring tends to be quite poor due to hard winter – Taupo different.
- Carried out assessment in the Waiau River, following impacts from Cyclone Gabrielle. Upper river is looking great but the lower river in poor shape.
- Short discussion about Flaxy.

9. <u>Other business.</u>

- MF – What is the outlook for the fishery this winter. MV – no concerns given the condition of maiden and recovered fish we are currently seeing. We will know more when we get the results back from the latest productivity survey, and begin to get results from the fish trap monitoring.
- BC – Questions about missing marker poles at the mouth of the Waimarino and Tauranga-Taupō. Fishery Team aware and both are scheduled for replacement.

10. <u>Next Meeting.</u>

- Proposed for last weekend in July - 25 July 2024
- Would it be possible for TFAC to visit the fish trap at Lake Otamangakau. Fishery Team will investigate options.

Meeting Closed at 7.30pm.