



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 3 December 2018

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Kauri dieback

National Pest Management Plan (NPMP) and Agency

- DOC contributes to this work with MPI and other partners, and has recently reviewed a draft version of the NPMP.
- DOC will look at what would be required to implement the NPMP rules and what information the Agency would require.

Tane Mahuta

- As agreed with Te Roroa, DOC is undertaking installation of side barriers on the Tane Mahuta walkway. Installation commenced on 27 November and will take two to three weeks to install.
- The Yakas Track remains closed until further notice.

Track Closures

- The DOC website has been updated with the dates all tracks will be closed.

Boot bags

- DOC staff will be distributing new 'boot bags' to the public this summer, as part of a new trial initiative from MPI.
- The bags will be provided to track users to put their dirty boots in to take home and clean.

Other

- We note and will respond to your specific questions regarding the recent kauri dieback Official Information Act request.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.2 Myrtle rust

- DOC staff are supporting and attending the myrtle rust science symposium to be held on 13 and 14 December 2018.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.3 Ramp Up Programme

- The 90-day recruitment plans are proceeding and we are hiring HR recruitment staff to support the increase in recruitment volume.
- Deputy Directors-General are currently completing and submitting their new 90-day recruitment plans (for January to March 2019). This will be complete by 10 December.
- Operations are providing detail for the next 18 months of front-line operations and will forecast investments in locations and regions. This will be complete by 14 December.
- New appointments will be made on a flexible working basis where appropriate.

Budget 2018 – \$181.6m recruitment report as of 28 November 2018

- Roles advertised this week:
 - Senior Trainer
 - Principal Advisor, Wellbeing

- Principal Advisor, Leadership Support
- Engagement Manager, Mackenzie
- Roles provisionally appointed this week:
 - Regional Lead (SSI), Battle for our Birds

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.4 Significant conservation matters at Select Committee and in the House

- You requested a weekly update on key conservation matters before select committees and the House. We are establishing a system to collect and report this information and it will be a regular feature in the Status Report from the start of 2019.
- In the interim, the table below summarises the status of your Bills and other significant select committee matters. We are defining 'significant' as matters where DOC has been asked to brief or appear before a committee.
- Please note that there may be a few items that we inadvertently omit as we establish the reporting system – we will make best efforts to avoid this.
- We welcome your feedback on the format and content.

Contact: [REDACTED]

Item	Status	DOC contact	Last updated
Conservation (Indigenous Freshwater Fish) Amendment Bill	With Environment Committee. Submissions have closed. Initial briefing has been provided and further reports requested by committee. Two submission hearings have been held. Next hearing is Feb 2019. 100 submissions to be heard.	[REDACTED]	29 Nov
Conservation (Infringement System) Bill	Reported back from select committee. Second reading occurred on 27 Nov. LEG paper for an SOP has been lodged and will be considered by LEG on 6 Dec. Committee of the Whole House is scheduled for 11 Dec and third reading for 18 Dec - your office has requested assistance for these	[REDACTED]	29-Nov
Department of Conservation Annual Review	3 Dec - provide draft question responses (194) to your office 11 Dec - responses due to the committee 13 Dec - hearing date We expect further questions following the hearing	[REDACTED]	27 Nov

1.5 RMA advocacy

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

Declarations

- None this week.

Submissions

- The Hamilton RMA team has lodged a submission to Bay of Plenty Regional Council in opposition to the proposed Rotorua waste water treatment plant upgrade seeking that the preferred method of discharge is changed. The proposal involves:
 - clearance of vegetation within a Significant Natural Area
 - clearance of rare geothermal habitat
 - naturally uncommon species
 - construction and excavation in the vicinity of geothermal surface feature
 - potential impacts on the water quality of Lake Rotorua, and
 - potential flow on effects on the threatened and at-risk bird colonies of the Sulphur Bay Wildlife Refuge.

Appeals

- None this week.

Designations

- None this week.

Water Conservation Orders

- None this week.

Other

- DOC appeared at a hearing in opposition to an inappropriate coastal structure in an area with high natural character values, outstanding landscape values, and threatened marine species. The hearing was successful with DOC, Environmental Defence Society, and the community all being heard in opposition. After the hearing, the applicant withdrew their application.

Contact: _____

2 Updates

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 Think-piece: Reflecting Treaty Partner in NZCA and Conservation Boards

- Earlier this year DOC initiated a think-piece on how to better reflect the Treaty Partnership in NZCA and Conservation Board arrangements.
- We engaged [REDACTED] and had discussions with them, and have also sought input from across DOC.
- Challenges include:
 - Balancing the tension between decision-making at a national level versus iwi aspirations to have local/at place decision-making.
 - Current legislation lacking levers to better reflect Treaty Partner aspirations.
 - There are already multiple, inconsistent approaches in place due to Treaty Settlements.
 - [REDACTED]
- The Office of Treaty Settlements has been made aware that this work is underway and that it is seen as a project for you to consider outside of Treaty negotiations.
- An initial draft paper outlining some options, both within and outside of current legislation has been developed and we are gaining feedback currently from [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED].

Contact: Mervyn English, DDG Strategy and People

2.3 New Zealand Conservation Authority – public member

- Nominations for the vacant public position on the NZCA were advertised on 15 and 29 August via newspapers and DOC's social media channels. Nominations closed on 17 September and 23 nominations were received [briefing 18-B-1174 refers].
- In a subsequent meeting between you and Mervyn English, DDG Strategy and People, it was decided that further nominations be sought in order to find a suitable candidate.
- The position was advertised again on 9 and 23 November, via the same media, with a closing date of 7 December.
- Prior to this second round of advertisements being placed, all nominees from the first round were advised of the fact, and informed that their nomination would remain live.
- To date, there have been two enquiries, resulting in one new nomination received.
- In order to appoint a replacement member before the House rises for the end of the year, a candidate would need to be identified by 7 December. Paperwork would then need to be prepared and lodged on 10 December for the final APH meeting of the year on 12 December – providing dispensation is sought, and granted, from the Prime Minister's Office in order to do so.

Contact: Mervyn English, DDG Strategy and People



2.5 Hoiho breeding season

- This year's estimate of the minimum number of hoiho breeding pairs is 219, down from 254 last season. DOC is monitoring nests along with the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, Penguin Rescue, Penguin Place, University of Otago and volunteers.
- An outbreak of diphtheria in chicks at North Otago and Otago Peninsula has had a significant effect.
- Diphtheria is often fatal. We are using a disease management protocol developed by veterinarians, but interventions have limited success.
- At Bushy Beach (Oamaru), and Otago Peninsula sites, Penguin Place and Sandfly Bay, all nests have failed. At DOC sites on Otago Peninsula 9 of 21 nests have been lost.
- At North Otago (Penguin Rescue) chicks were monitored daily and 80% treated with antibiotics, but of 70 chicks, 16 have died from diphtheria.
- Chicks in the Catlins are currently free of diphtheria.
- Hoiho chicks become less susceptible to diphtheria about three weeks after hatching.
- Avian malaria is also a concern, as it caused up to 30 penguin deaths last season. A proactive approach is being taken to kill mosquito larvae in wet areas near hoiho breeding sites.
- We can provide further information to you as required. We are also preparing reactive messages should we receive any media enquiries.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 Great Walks Differential Pricing Trial – evaluation report & briefing

- In May 2018 you approved the trial of differential pricing for four of the nine Great Walks for the 2018/19 season. You also asked us to assess the effectiveness of the trial and report back in the new year.
- Information collection is well underway, and we will brief report to you in April 2019. A briefing paper will accompany the evaluation report.
- Next week we will provide your office with a draft outline for both the briefing paper and the evaluation report. No results will be included at this early stage but we are keen to ensure that you have early input so that we understand the content required in these documents. Your feedback will enable us to confirm that we are collecting the required information and are planning to focus analysis effort on the appropriate areas.
- We will provide a progress update on the trial prior to Christmas.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.7 Visitor Centre Strategy refresh

- We are updating the Visitor Centre Strategy, which was developed in 2015 so that it provides clearer guidance and takes into account the current and future needs of visitors.
- We currently operate a network of 19 visitor centres that provide face to face information to visitors (1.79 million in 2017/18), as well as assistance to many more via phone and email communications.
- 15 of the centres are located at or near National Parks and/or conservation areas. There are four centres located within the main cities of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Four centres are co-located with an iSite.

- The purpose of visitor centres is to provide information to visitors, in ways that connect people with conservation, facilitate safe participation in recreation, and contribute towards achieving positive outcomes for conservation.
- The project includes external market research to establish the information needs of our visitors including how and when they want their information, stakeholder consultation, and an environmental scan. The new strategy will be finalised by March 2019.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.8 Wild Creations

This item responds to your requests for information on:

- What is the annual cost of the Wild Creations programme?
- Why has the programme been restarted after not operating from 2012-2017 inclusive?
- The previous Wild Creations programme ran from 2002 to 2012, when the contract between the partners, DOC and Creative New Zealand (CNZ) ended. At this time, CNZ and DOC agreed to redirect staff and resources to other programmes, with the understanding that Wild Creations could be revisited at some time in the future.
- DOC and CNZ discussed the idea of re-establishing the programme in 2016 and determined, with some adjustments, it should be re-established as a reinvigorated programme that would help both organisations achieve key goals. These goals included better connecting New Zealanders to conservation, raising awareness of conservation issues and greater public engagement with the arts.
- In 2017, CNZ and DOC signed an agreement to pilot a re-invigorated programme to provide artists with access to a range of conservation experiences (such as a threatened species experience, or a historic icon experience). Wild Creations was successful for the 2017 pilot year in funding projects that both DOC and CNZ anticipate will deliver strongly to DOC's core conservation value of 'contributing to the New Zealand conservation story' and CNZ's strategic outcome, 'High-quality New Zealand arts is developed'.
- As a result of the successful pilot DOC and CNZ agreed to continue the programme in 2018, and in principle in 2019 and 2020.
- This programme represents a good return on investment for DOC, which is not making a direct financial contribution, but is supporting artists with preparation for their conservation experiences, accommodation at DOC sites and transport to get there from the nearest DOC office, when required.
- Creative New Zealand is investing up to \$36,000 (excluding GST) per annum to support this programme. These funds are to support artist stipends and agreed costs associated with up to three proposals.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.9 Improving whitebait management

Iwi and community engagement

- Regional drop-in sessions are complete. The last drop-in session took place in New Plymouth on 27 November. There were 50–60 attendees.
- 2,450 responses have been submitted to the online survey as of 28 November. This survey will remain open through to 7 January 2019.

- Feedback from the drop-in sessions remains broadly consistent with that provided by the Whitebait Working Group and the online survey responses.
- Treaty partner engagement is ongoing.

Communications

- [REDACTED] is preparing an item on whitebait for Radio New Zealand's Insight programme. DOC has provided information about the improving whitebait management work to [REDACTED], including drop-in sessions and the number of survey responses. DOC staff have also been interviewed for this programme.

Issues and Options paper

- We are now preparing the Issues and Options paper which is due to you, together with our advice on next steps for this process, by February 2019.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.10 Argentine ants on Kāpiti Coast

- An Argentine ant nest was confirmed at the Kāpiti Boating club at Paraparumu Beach on 1 May 2018.
- At a status meeting with you on 14 May, DDG Operations Michael Slater advised he would seek to transfer community grant funding to the current financial year to support the community to undertake control work.
- This transfer of funds did not eventuate as, subsequent to your status meeting, DOC worked with Kāpiti Coast District Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council on a programme of eradication, control and ongoing monitoring for Argentine Ants at this site.
- The programme comprised initial eradication and control, followed by ongoing monitoring of the site and buffer zone around it.
- No Argentine ants have been detected following survey of Mana, Kāpiti and Mātū/Somes by an Argentine Ant Detection Dog.
- Monitoring and control by the agencies is ongoing.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Events, Announcements and Media Opportunities



3.2 Green Ribbon Awards update

- Earlier this year, it was recognised that there was a need to refresh the awards approach, given the significant increase in environmental awards programmes.
- MfE and DOC have carried out an initial review and remain committed to running the awards, which are well regarded by previous award winners and the community conservation sector.
- This review included a stakeholder survey sent to previous winners, applicants and stakeholders.

- [Redacted]

Contact: [Redacted]

4 Director-General Engagements

December

5 Dec	DOC Christmas Function, The Boatshed, Wellington
6 Dec	Te Urewera meeting, Taneatua
7–10 Dec	Chatham Islands visit, Chatham Islands
11 Dec	NZ Conservation Authority, Wellington
13 Dec	Environment Select Committee Annual Review, Wellington
14–16 Dec	Meeting with Te Roroa, Northland
19 Dec	Tourism CE's meeting, Wellington

5 Addendum

There are no addendum items this week.

Proactively released



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Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 10 December 2018

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Kauri dieback

New track ambassadors

- Four new trained kauri dieback ambassadors began work on 3 December at sites across Auckland.
- The ambassadors educate the public on the risks of going off-track and of not complying at DOC's cleaning stations.

Kauri dieback exhibit

- DOC won a bronze award at the NZ Flower & Garden Show for the department's kauri dieback exhibit. The event attracts 40,000 people.
- DOC staff in attendance gave out information and advice on the disease, as well as offering advice about backyard trapping.

Trapping in areas with kauri

- DOC's Auckland team is working with Auckland Council and Forest & Bird to develop a special training programme for community groups that are trapping in areas with kauri. Training is planned for the second quarter of 2019.

Cleaning station videos

- DOC has produced a couple of short videos on how to help stop the spread of kauri dieback. The videos will be promoted widely over the summer period and are available on DOC's kauri dieback webpages.

Tane Mahuta

- Fencing on the Tane Mahuta walkway is to commence on 17 December, pending the delivery of all materials.

Boot bags

- You inquired whether the boot bags being trialled as a mechanism to help manage kauri dieback would be made of plastic. MPI have confirmed that the initial trial of 1000 bags are made from a hard-wearing plastic, that can be washed and re-used. Unfortunately, porous material is not suitable. Currently it is in trial to monitor the uptake and success. We will work with MPI on options should it be considered further.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.2 Myrtle rust

- Based on prior trends, DOC anticipates any significant new incursions that may arise this summer would occur from mid-January.
- We are currently preparing updated advice for staff on what to do.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.3 Ramp Up Programme

- Deputy Directors-General continue to complete and submit their new 90-day recruitment plans (for January to March 2019). This will be complete by 10 December 2018.

- Detailed planning for scope, depth and location of future activities to deliver investment outcomes continues across the Biodiversity and Operations groups.
- A proposal to lease additional floor space in Hamilton hub is under consideration to account for increased conservation activity and resulting accommodation requirements.
- A property and accommodation plan has been aligned to proposed work plans across regions to manage accommodation requirements, reduce associated travel overheads, improve DOC collaboration and reduce related stress on DOC staff.

Budget 2018 – \$181.6m recruitment report 29 November–4 December 2018

- Roles advertised in this period:
 - Engineer/Project Manager (Taupō)
 - Biodiversity Planner (Taupō)
- Roles provisionally appointed in this period:
 - DOC/PSA HPE Advisor (secondment)

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.4 RMA advocacy

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

Declarations

- None this week.

Submissions

- None this week.

Appeals

- Mediation on the Queenstown Lakes District Plan takes place from 3-6 December 2018. DOC interests are primarily in relation to clearance of indigenous vegetation.

Designations

- None this week.

Water Conservation Orders

- None this week.

Other

- The Director Operations Southern South Island has provided a reply to the Otago Regional Council (ORC) concerning the DG's position on a new policy and rule concerning the water race network on the proposed Lindis Plan Change 5A, as sought by the Environment Court's section 293 direction. The DG supports the proposed "phase out" of the race network to ensure instream flow improvements in the Lindis River, which will eliminate the "drying reach" caused by existing race abstraction.
- ORC has arranged for a workshop on 13 December to discuss options for a National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management compliant plan change process for developing minimum flow and allocation regimes for the Arrow, Cardrona and Manuherikia catchments. DOC planning staff will be attending.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.2 South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO): 7th Annual meeting of the Commission

- You will shortly receive a copy of a MFAT/MPI briefing for the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Fisheries on the seventh meeting of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO), which is being held 19–27 January in the Hague, Netherlands.
- DOC will be attending this meeting as part of the New Zealand delegation.
- Our priority for the meeting is to seek agreement on new conservation management measures (CMMs) to manage bottom fishing in the SPRFMO area, led by New Zealand and Australia.
- The CMMs cover two key issues:
 - providing catch limits and allocations for deepsea stocks (including orange roughy); and
 - measures to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs), including spatial management and encounter protocol arrangements.
- DOC has worked closely with MFAT, MPI, and stakeholders over the last year to further develop the bottom fishing CMMs. While we expect some criticism of some components from fishing industry and environmental NGOs, we are confident that it offers a significant improvement in the conservation approach to managing bottom fishing in the SPRFMO Convention Area.
- The meeting also offers the opportunity to build relationships with priority SPRFMO members to enhance conservation of NZ's vulnerable seabirds, including the Antipodean wandering albatross and black petrel. This includes China, Taiwan, Ecuador and Chile.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 2018 national Wild Animal Recovery Operations (WARO) permit

- You requested a list of key dates/next steps in the national WARO concessions process. These are provided below.

Proposed key dates/next steps

27 Nov 2018	Second round of WARO concession consultation commenced.
31 Jan 2019	Conclusion of second round of consultation.
1 Feb–15 Feb 2019	Assessment of submissions received, with summary to be added to Decision Support document.
18 Feb–15 Mar 2019	Draft Decision Support document to be forwarded to WARO Operators to correct any factual errors and to provide comment (as required by the Conservation Act 1987).
18 Mar–22 Mar 2019	Decision Support document to be finalised for decision maker.
25 Mar–29 Mar 2019	Decision maker [REDACTED] to make decision on the national WARO concession.
April 2019	Permit to be offered to WARO Operators.

- We have also provided your office with a copy of the updated Comms Plan and Fact Sheet.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Deer monitoring

- You have asked what monitoring data is available or soon to be available for the public on the impact of deer on forest health.
- The monitoring we carry out is either at a national-scale (Tier 1 monitoring programme), or site-specific monitoring (e.g. Raukumara).
- The site-specific monitoring is used to inform planning and engagement for that place – for example Ngā Whenua Rāhui are currently leading a process for the development and implementation of a plan for control of deer and goat in the Raukumara Forest Park and surrounding private land. This involves working closely with Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, surrounding landowners, NZCA, East Coast and Bay of Plenty Conservation Boards and environmental groups. The initial meeting to frame up this process was held on 28 November in Opotiki.
- The results from DOC's national monitoring programme (Tier 1) are available on our website and are updated each year following the Annual Report.
- This data shows a significant increasing trend over the last 5 years in the number of sites where ungulates are present on public conservation land.
- Observed ungulate faecal pellet indices (FPIs) at a site and park averages can be explored on the map depicting public conservation land.
- If a site has a higher FPI (index of abundance) than the national average, then the potential for negative impacts on plants preferred by ungulates is higher.

Even at low densities ungulates could still have negative impacts on preferred plant species if they are present.

- Between survey periods across public conservation land, indigenous trees that are palatable to ungulates show an imbalance in their populations, with higher mortality than recruitment. This data has been previously communicated to the public in the Land Domain Report by MfE and StatisticsNZ.
- Information on vegetation impact and population density at key sites is critical for guiding DOC's response, as is working with key stakeholders.
- We have prepared proposals for scaling up the information captured at key sites to support engagement with stakeholders and identify the additional resources required for implementation.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Kauri dieback – Kauri Coast

- You asked for information about scientists who had approached Te Roroa about kauri dieback.
- The following list of people are all kauri dieback researchers and are working with Te Roroa in their TAG process:



Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 Maukahuka – Pest-free Auckland Island

- The summer field trials programme on Auckland Island has now commenced. The first research team of 12 people deployed on the yacht *Evohe* on 21 November and is due to return 18 December.
- This is the first of five main research phases between now and March 2019.
- Phase one is focusing on:
 - scoping infrastructure sites (fence lines for pigs, sites for future structures, storage, and helicopter and boat access); and
 - collaring cats with GPS tags to understand their behaviour and to enable a detectability study in February 2019.
- The team is making great progress.
- Twelve cats have been caught and several tagged. These can be monitored online and will be tracked for up to 12 months.
- A site for a field camp at Smith Harbour has been identified and is being prepared for the arrival of a helicopter and a five-person bivvy in late December.
- Satellite internet has been established at Port Ross and is being tested at Falla Peninsula. Broadband-quality coverage is available, which will significantly influence the project design and future communications strategy.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.7 Upcoming publication on island biosecurity

This publication, which resulted from the 2017 Island Invasives conference in Dundee, reinforces New Zealand's reputation as a world leader in island biosecurity and eradications. Two of DOC's Technical Advisors presented at the symposium and co-authored the paper.

Connecting island communities on a global scale: case studies in island biosecurity

Western North American Naturalist 78:959–972. Matos, J., A. Little, K. Broome, et al. 2018.

- Invasive alien species represent one of the greatest threats to island ecosystems and the unique species that inhabit them. In many instances, eradication or control programmes for invasive alien species have effectively curtailed the ongoing loss of biodiversity on islands.
- Prevention is a more proactive and cost-effective approach and is an emerging global priority in the conservation of island ecosystems. Island biosecurity programmes attempt to prevent the introduction and establishment of invasive alien species on islands and dictate actions when an invasive species is detected.
- This paper reviews the principal tenets of island biosecurity—prevention, detection, and response—using case studies of current island biosecurity programmes from New Zealand, Chile, Mexico, the United States, and Canada.

Contact: [REDACTED]

Proactively released

3 Events, Announcements and Media Opportunities

3.1 Invitation to announce the Hihi/Stitchbird Best Practice Guide

- Hihi are Threatened and there are only a few thousand birds remaining. The biggest population is found on Te Hauturu-o-toi / Little Barrier Island and translocated populations are found at six reintroduced and managed sites in the North Island (Tiritiri Matangi, Kapiti Island, Zealandia, Maungatautari, Bushy Park, Rotokare). It is challenging to recover hihi and all reintroduced populations need supportive management in the form of biosecurity, supplementary feeding and nest boxes.
- The Hihi Best Practice Guide brings together the collective knowledge of hihi experts in one document to help site managers maximise their hihi population.
- DOC proposes to publish the Hihi Best Practice Guide on the DOC website during the week beginning 17 December. We have provided your office with a copy of the report.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3.2 Dates set for Conservation Week 2019

- The dates for next year's Conservation Week have been set as 14–22 September 2019.
- We anticipate there will be a stakeholder event in each of the 9 regions that you could attend. The Loder Cup will also be presented during Conservation Week.
- In 2019 we will be celebrating 50 years of Conservation Week. The New Zealand Scout Association originally started Conservation Week for New Zealand in 1969. The Nature Conservation Council then ran the campaign until DOC took it over in 1987.
- We are looking to work with our partners and community to amplify Conservation Week in accordance with the 50-year milestone.

Contact: [REDACTED]

4 Director-General Engagements

December

- 11 Dec NZ Conservation Authority, Wellington
- 13 Dec Environment Select Committee Annual Review, Wellington
- 14–16 Dec Meeting with Te Roroa, Northland
- 19 Dec Tourism CE's meeting, Wellington

January

- 23 Jan Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki – Conservation Relationship Agreement signing event, Motutapu Island
- 28 Jan–15 Feb Annual Leave

Proactively released

5 Addendum

This section includes content that is sensitive or is being considered by the Minister of Conservation or other Ministers. This information is not being released proactively.

Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Treaty of Waitangi matters related to Lake Horowhenua

Proactively released



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Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 17 December 2018

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Kauri Dieback

National Pest Management Plan

- MPI's third round of public consultation will now be held in the new year.

Cleaning Stations

- DOC is ordering a further 40 cleaning stations, to be rolled out in the new year. We aim to have up to four of these installed prior to Christmas.
- The contract also allows for DOC's kauri dieback programme partners to order cleaning stations. Auckland Council is currently looking to do so.

Behaviour change summer research

- DOC's behaviour change research into its new mark 2 cleaning stations is under way.
- Various trials are being held at cleaning station sites across kauri lands to help improve compliance.
- The research is taking place throughout the summer, finishing at the end of February 2019.

Aotea/Great Barrier Island track closures

- We will be closing three tracks on Aotea/Great Barrier Island as of 31 January 2019, to help prevent kauri dieback.
- The closures are part of the 21 track closures you announced in October.
- The decision to close the tracks was made after a public consultation process.
- DOC will close both the Whangaparapara Peak and Whangaparapara Pack tracks completely. The Old Lady Track will be partially closed, and the open section of the track upgraded.
- We issued a media release announcing the closures on 13 December.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.2 Myrtle Rust

DOC and MPI summer update

- On 18 December, DOC and MPI will be providing a national update on myrtle rust for the summer period, via a joint agency media release.
- The update will include a reminder to the public about what to do if the presence of myrtle rust is suspected.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.3 RMA Advocacy Update

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

Submissions

- On 13 December, we lodged a submission in opposition to the NZTA Manawatu Gorge Bypass - Submission on Notice of Requirement for designation. Areas of concern include gaps in assessment of vegetation and habitats impacted by the new alignment, inadequacy of mitigation and offset/compensation measures, the effects on visitor experience at the Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve, ensuring formalised access to the Reserve, management and effects of the current state highway through the gorge, and ensuring conditions are

robust and adequately provide for DOC's review and input. We are with NZTA to resolve these matters.

Other

- We are pleased to report that a resource consent application for a large private jetty at Waipohutukawa Bay in the Bay of Islands has been withdrawn. DOC lodged a submission opposing the jetty, and asking that consent be declined. The proposed structure was contrary to a range of planning policies, including the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, particularly in relation to effects on outstanding natural landscapes, high natural character, and threatened or at-risk species. In mid-November, the hearing panel heard opposition from DOC, the Environmental Defence Society, and a local community group. Three days after the close of the hearing, the applicant withdrew the application.

Contact: [REDACTED]

Proactively released

2 Updates

2.1 Milford Aerodrome Landings Management

- We informed Milford operators in September of DOC's decision on the management of the Milford Aerodrome Landings, following a planned and regular review. Our decision included removal of the supplementary pool, withdrawal from the Queenstown Milford User Group (QMUG) Memorandum of Understanding (as it primarily relates to the supplementary pool), landing fee increases and the cessation of 'clawback' for unused landings.

Supplementary Pool Cancellation

- We made the decision to cancel the supplementary pool (effective 1 January 2019), as it was becoming difficult to manage, and we also wanted to bring landings more into line with provisions in the Fiordland National Park Management Plan.
- There are approximately 2,000 allocated regular landings unused annually, out of a total of over 12,000 regular landings that are allocated. The supplementary pool held approximately 2,500 additional landings.
- DOC met with concerned operators on 19 November to discuss our decision and hear their concerns. We have invited operators to provide alternative ideas for our consideration, providing they remain consistent with the management plan.
- Some operators have advised that they are prepared to take legal action over our decisions.

- [REDACTED]

Landing Fees

- Operators were informed in March 2017 that landing fees will increase on 1 January 2019, from \$15 plus GST per landing to \$19 plus GST per landing. The timing allowed 21 months for operators to prepare for the increase.
- Fees will increase again on 1 January 2020, from \$19 plus GST per landing, to a weight-based calculation, ranging from \$45 - \$200 plus GST per landing. The operators were advised of this increase in September, giving them 15 months to plan for this increase.
- The timing for the increases is undertaken giving regard to the concession contract conditions (every three years) and operators were given advanced warning of a rent review being undertaken.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy

- Early engagement on the New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy (NZBS) is under way. Events held this month include the first meeting of the three reference groups (Te Ao Māori, Science and Stakeholders), stakeholder workshops in Wellington and Auckland, three hui in Northland, and an internal session for DOC staff.
- The project team has identified a number of key themes emerging from engagement to date, as outlined below.
- Iwi and hapu see biodiversity in the frame of 'Te Tai Ao' (the natural world) and recognise the essential link between people, culture and the environment. Stakeholders and reference groups also emphasised the interconnection between people and nature, and the opportunity for the strategy to enhance the social benefits such a connection provides. This was described as people restoring nature, and nature restoring people. Its significance underpins the importance of biodiversity, and will help to broaden the focus of the strategy.
- Iwi and hapu also want to play a greater role in managing biodiversity on public and private land, and expressed their desire for an improved partnership with the Crown where conservation lands are co-managed or managed directly by iwi.
- There is a strong desire for the strategy to be flexible enough when setting priorities for biodiversity to allow for local approaches to meet local needs.
- Engaging youth in the strategy, the importance of education and the view that the strategy is being developed for future generations were other common topics.

- The desire for a broad-scale approach to biodiversity management, including working across ecosystems and domains, was frequently expressed. Other suggested focus points for the strategy included the elevation of marine biodiversity as a priority, and building public and community support so that the priorities of the strategy can continue through multiple terms of government.
- Engagement will continue into early 2019, with more hui and stakeholder workshops planned, as well as a second meeting of the reference groups. We will continue to analyse what we have heard as we shape the themes for a discussion document, to be developed by mid-2019.
- We will provide you with a memo by 20 December, detailing further information gathered from our early engagement.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Improving whitebait management

Iwi and community engagement

- We have received 2,730 responses to our online survey, up to 11 December. The survey will remain open through to 7 January 2019.
- Stakeholders are also submitting their views through the dedicated whitebait@doc.govt.nz email address.
- Treaty partner engagement is ongoing.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Ramp Up Programme

Budget 2018 – \$181.6m recruitment report as of 11 December 2018

- Roles advertised this week:
 - Geospatial Information Coordinator (Nelson)
 - Business Analyst (Booking System) (Wellington)
- Roles provisionally appointed this week:
 - Programme Administrator Mackenzie (Christchurch)
 - Heritage and Visitor Strategy and Insight Manager (Wellington)
 - Principal Advisor, Heritage (Wellington)

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 Update on the Agreement with Hunter Valley Station for Public Access

- We signed an Agreement with Orange Lakes Limited for public access across Hunter Valley Station in September.
- Under the Agreement, public access through Hunter Valley Station commenced on 1 December.

- Public information on the Agreement is now live on the DOC and Hunter Valley Station websites.
- Hunter Valley Station has reported that it has received 40 access enquiries to date.
- A review of the Agreement is scheduled for February 2019, and will include consideration of any further support for the Station to manage public enquiries.

Contact: [REDACTED]



2.8 Pacific Reset

- At the Status Meeting with officials on 10 December, you asked about DOC's involvement in the Pacific Reset.

DOC is partnering with MFAT

- Our International Team has been working closely with MFAT to identify partnership opportunities to deliver on the Pacific Reset.
- This includes shaping MFAT's new, refreshed climate change programme to give greater focus on conservation objectives, and the submitting of project concepts for potential funding.
- We have secured MFAT's acknowledgement that "responding to invasive alien species linked to climate change" will be included under the refreshed, overarching climate change programme.
- We have submitted several project concepts for consideration. These include a Pacific-wide invasive species initiative; rat eradication on Tokelau (and, potentially, Niue); and a proposal for conservation capacity-building assistance.

Approval to fund initiatives is taking time

- MFAT is not yet approving new climate change project concepts (including those submitted by DOC). This is because it is still establishing the new climate change programme, and developing new governance and funding approval processes for its broader Official Development Assistance (ODA) activities.
- MFAT has indicated that the climate change programme is likely to be finalised and approved in March 2019. We will then know more about how our invasive species project concepts might progress under this overarching programme.

In the meantime, the department is promoting the role of conservation in the Pacific Reset

- DOC wants to ensure that the Pacific Reset reflects conservation. We are therefore actively promoting conservation and the environment in MFAT's messaging and Cabinet papers, where possible.
- Most recently, we contributed to the Pacific Reset report-back to Cabinet paper (considered and agreed by the External Relations and Security (ERS) Committee on 4 December: ERS-18-MIN-0028 refers). The final version of the paper went to Cabinet in the week ending 14 December for endorsement. We are comfortable with the content of the paper, which now includes most of DOC's suggested changes to better reflect the role of conservation and the environment in the Pacific Reset.
- DOC's International Team is also developing a broader Pacific strategy to support the delivery of the "Pacific Reset".

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.9 Convention on Biological Diversity National Reporting - Update

- We are revising the final version of New Zealand's Sixth National Report under the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- The final draft now includes material from 21 external submissions received in November. Submissions came from regional councils, NGOs, Crown Research Institutes, scientific bodies, consultancies, and industry groups. Many are very comprehensive (covering all, or multiple, targets), which reflects a high level of engagement on the reporting and the Convention.
- We will provide you with the fully-revised version in January (along with a summary of external input received, and changes made as a result).
- Because of the large number of submissions received, DOC intends to file the report later than the Convention Secretariat's deadline, at the end of this year. There are no critical issues associated with a later filing: The Secretariat has been alerted to this possibility and is comfortable with it.
- In January 2019, we will be seeking your approval to release the full report, publicly, and to the Convention Secretariat.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.10 Science Summer Scholarships

- This is the third year of DOC's Science Summer Scholarships programme, the objective of which is to inspire students to pursue a career in conservation by giving them the opportunity to experience first-hand the work that DOC does. Over 30 students have participated in the programme in the past two years.
- Scholarship projects are usually jointly funded and supervised by DOC and participating universities, an arrangement that helps us to build and improve

on our relationships with academics involved in conservation research across New Zealand.

- This summer, 17 students will be working on small-scale conservation-based research projects over a ten-week period.
- The scholarship topics have been developed by DOC's technical and science advisors to ensure projects are aligned with, and address, priority conservation challenges.
- Topics covered include natural heritage, social sciences, recreation and partnerships. Examples of projects under way are:
 - Detection and quantification of dead plant material within forest canopies using remote sensing methods
 - How DOC can enable over 65's (seniors) to lead others into nature and conservation
 - Orange-fronted parakeet nest monitoring
 - Factors affecting the regeneration and survival of the heart-leaved kohuhu (*Pittosporum obcordatum*), Back Valley, Fiordland.
- Students are expected to report on their research projects by the end of April next year.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.11 The Collaborative Community Education Model (CCEM) and alignment with Enviroschools

- You have asked about the relationship between the Collaborative Community Education Model (CCEM) and Enviroschools.
- The CCEM is a framework for schools and communities to provide teaching and learning, based on real conservation projects. Clusters of schools engage with their communities around local conservation projects.
- Education programmes based on the CCEM are grounded on five principles:
 - Authentic conservation teaching and learning opportunity and context
 - Collaboration across year levels, between schools and across the wider community
 - A student-led ethos, with students in the driver's seat
 - A vertical approach, providing a continuous (cross-curriculum) learning journey
 - Teacher professional development and support.
- There are three established CCEM programmes: Kids Restore the Kepler, Kids Greening Taupō, and Dunedin Town Belt Kaitiaki. New programmes are being set up in Porirua, Wairarapa and Christchurch. Communities throughout the country have expressed interest in the CCEM programme.
- Enviroschools supports CCEM, and sees it as a complementary programme, aligning with the Enviroschools theme of 'Living Landscapes'. There is a close working relationship between Enviroschools and CCEM.
- Enviroschools regional coordinators/facilitators have helped to initiate new CCEM programmes; specifically, in Christchurch, Wairarapa and Porirua. Facilitators work closely with CCEM Coordinators, collaborating to meet school needs and support action on the ground. Enviroschools facilitators are also active in CCEM teacher planning meetings and professional development workshops.
- As the CCEM programme engages new communities, Enviroschools will continue to be involved at both the strategic and local levels.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Events, Announcements and Media Opportunities

None this week.

4 Director-General Engagements

2018

19 Dec 2018 Tourism CE's meeting, Wellington

2019

23 Jan 2019 Ngai Tai ki Tamaki – Conservation Relationship Agreement – signing event, Motutapu Island

28 Jan-15 Feb 2019 Annual leave

Proactively released

5 Addendum

This section includes content that is sensitive or is being considered by the Minister of Conservation or other Ministers. This information is not being released proactively.

Subject headings of content in this section are:

- National Environmental Standard: Marine Aquaculture

Proactively released