



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 4 June 2019

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Productively released

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Kauri dieback

National Pest Management Plan (NPMP)

- [REDACTED]
- On 29 May, we provided you with the supporting briefing from MPI to the Minister for Biosecurity with updated information (19-B-0397 refers).
- [REDACTED]

Management Agency

- As noted in 19-B-0397, a separate process is required to develop the management agency and we are awaiting further information from Biosecurity NZ on how that agency may work.

Tane Mahuta Response Plan

- DOC's Chief Science Advisor, National Project Manager (kauri dieback and myrtle rust), and local DOC staff met with Te Roroa on 28 May to discuss kauri dieback remote sensing baseline monitoring options, and the vision for a wider Waipoua Forest Health Plan.
- It was agreed that further discussions on the role of kauri dieback management, and the need for monitoring, in the wider at-place forest health planning will occur.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.2 Myrtle rust

- No myrtle rust update this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.3 RMA Advocacy Update

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

Declarations

None this week

Submissions

- On 17 May, we submitted in opposition to a resource consent application to establish and operate a 30ha mussel spat catching farm in Mercury Bay, on the east coast of the Coromandel. The applicant is Ngati Hei Trust. There are no other marine farms in Mercury Bay.
- The site is identified as 'appropriate' in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Spatial Plan; however, the application may have significant adverse effects on the very high outstanding natural character of the area. We are therefore seeking mitigation of these effects.

Appeals

None this week

Designations

None this week

Water Conservation Orders

None this week

Other

- We are involved in an upcoming hearing for an application to upgrade the Rotorua Wastewater Treatment Plant and discharge treated wastewater to Lake Rotorua. The application has been directly referred to the Environment Court. We submitted in opposition due to impacts on geothermal surface features and water quality, habitat loss, and the potential adverse effects on threatened bird species within the receiving wildlife sanctuary. DOC will decide whether to become party to the proceedings in late June, when the Bay of Plenty Regional Council's report is released.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 Update on the Pike River Mine Site Rehabilitation Planning

Background

- In the early 2000s, and in conjunction with its applications for approvals required to develop the mine, Pike River Coal Ltd (as it was then) lodged a rehabilitation plan with DOC, the West Coast Regional Council and Grey District Council.
- Given the Solid Energy New Zealand (SENZ) Ltd decision not to re-enter the mine in 2014, and the Government's decision at the time to redevelop the mine site into a memorial and interpretation centre, the original rehabilitation plan was considered no longer fit for purpose.
- We are developing a new rehabilitation plan with SENZ. The focus of the new plan is to confirm what infrastructure would be removed from the site and to identify what infrastructure would remain, as well as ongoing monitoring and maintenance.

Pike River Recovery Agency (PRRA)

- Access Arrangements and obligations for the rehabilitation have been reassigned from SENZ to the PRRA.
- DOC and the PRRA are working on the detail of the plan, including confirming which buildings and structures will remain, the condition they will be left in, and the extent of rehabilitation work required to other areas affected by mining and recovery activities.
- Once finalised, the rehabilitation plan will be signed off by DOC's Director Operations Western South Island and the CEO of the PRRA.
- We can provide the plan to you for your interest when it is complete and agreed with PRRA.
- The PRRA has [REDACTED] specifically allocated for estimated rehabilitation and handover costs, including [REDACTED] for bridge upgrades.
- The projected date for handover of the rehabilitation project to DOC is 31 December.
- The condition of the drift, particularly beyond Pit Bottom in Stone (PBIS), remains unknown.
- The geotechnical integrity of the drift and the 'debris field' beyond PBIS, as well as the time taken by New Zealand Police to complete their forensic search of PBIS, could affect the handover date.
- We will keep you informed of progress.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 Ruapehu Alpine Lifts to open Happy Valley ski field

- Ruapehu Alpine Lifts (RAL) is planning to open Whakapapa's Happy Valley ski field to the public on 1 June.
- The Sky Waka gondola is in the final stages of construction and RAL has informed customers that the plaza area and car parks at the Top of the Bruce Road will have construction equipment in place until late June. RAL has given assurances that a health and safety plan will be in place and visitor behaviour at the Top of the Bruce will be managed.
- We will provide you with updates on the opening date for the Sky Waka when details are finalised.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 Proposal to revoke certain delegations from Territorial Authorities

- Certain powers under the Reserves Act 1977 were delegated (the 2013 delegations) to Territorial Authorities (TA's). Over the past year or so there have been instances where TA's have relied on these delegations to exercise the prior consent role of the Minister in circumstances where they have also made the initial decision to grant the instrument or activity applied for.
- A recent Court of Appeal decision considered the delegation of the Minister's prior consent role under s48 of the Reserves Act 1977 to be "highly unusual" and commented that it could be argued this replaced a two-step decision process with a single-step process.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- In January this year, you asked DOC to seek feedback from Chief Executives of TA's concerning the proposal. A letter was emailed to Chief Executives in March, requesting feedback by 17 May. This date is an extension to the original required-by date and was requested by Auckland Council.
- We are currently reviewing risks and impacts and will summarise and collate all information to brief you by end of August.
- As you are yet to be fully briefed on this work, we suggest that you forward or transfer all enquiries to DOC for a response.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 RMA/EEZ Strategy

- We have been using the draft RMA Strategy to help us focus and prioritise our work in the RMA System, presently being piloted in three regions.
- The Strategy has helped us to identify what work to engage in, and to make the most of our RMA resources. It will also enable transparency around how and when we decide to engage in RMA processes.
- Following the Director-General's final approval, a communications plan will inform stakeholders of the Strategy and how we intend to use it.

- We are available to meet with you should you require further details on this matter.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Wairarapa Community Water Storage – Provincial Growth Funding for pre-feasibility study

- Wairarapa Water Limited has secured Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) funding to complete pre-feasibility work on the construction of an 18.8 million m³ water storage facility based in the Wakamoekau River valley (northwest of Masterton), to supply water for private and public use.
- Currently, the application does not involve Public Conservation Land.
- Prior to the launch of the PGF, we had high-level discussions at district level with the applicant around a water storage facility. No specific location or method for storage had been determined at that stage.
- The feedback we provided to the Provincial Development Unit during the PGF application process was that a site evaluation and sufficient resources would be required to assess potential ecological effects of the proposal on conservation values.
- It is uncertain what the ecological and other impacts would be at this stage as pre-feasibility work on the project has not yet begun. Based on similar projects, impacts may include the effects on habitat at the site, the effects of changes to river flows (potentially positive or negative) and the changes in land-use downstream.
- We expect that the applicant will continue to involve us through the pre-feasibility work and into any future consenting and construction phases.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 DOC Community Fund (DOCCF) update

- This round is targeted at community-led biodiversity projects. Nine regional assessment panels (plus a national panel) have been assessing 377 applications for ~\$8 million in available funding. We expect funding approvals to be confirmed by early July.
- Next steps are:
 - Central moderation of the panels' recommendations (DDG Operations and DDG Partnerships) – 18 June
 - Funding decisions confirmed – 1 July (the DG has delegated decision making to the DDG Partnerships)
 - Applicants advised of decisions (in confidence) – from early July
 - Memo to you detailing the successful applicants/projects and a proposed approach to coordinate funding announcements between your office and Regional Directors – 8 July
 - Funding announcements made by you and Regional Directors – from mid-July
- We will provide you with a memo on the DOCCF biodiversity hub funding pilot by 14 June.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.7 Pending announcement of Billion Trees funding for Tasman District

- We supported the Tasman Environmental Trust in its application for \$1.09 million from the Billion Trees Fund in September 2018. The application is for extensive planting around Waimea Inlet in the Tasman District. Some of the land is managed by DOC, and some is in privately held covenants, while the majority is managed by the Tasman District Council.
- This project contributes to the outcomes identified in the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance Strategy for the Nelson-Motueka area.
MPI has advised DOC that internal approval has been given for this application.

- Prior to officially announcing this funding, Te Uru Rākau/ Forestry New Zealand has requested written confirmation from the Tasman Environmental Trust that it has support from all iwi groups with interest in the area. The Trust is currently working to provide this.
- MPI has advised DOC that the Minister for Forestry wishes to announce this funding in early June. This is around the time that you will be attending the launch of the co-designed Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance Strategy in Nelson, during Matariki.
- You and the Minister for Forestry could consider aligning the announcement of the Waimea Inlet funding with the celebration of the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance Strategy.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.8 Morningstar Reserve treefall (Queenstown)

- We have completed our investigation into the treefall accident which occurred at Morningstar Reserve on 22 January, injuring a family of four from Wellington, who were holidaying in the district.
- The tree was located on marginal strip land adjacent to DOC's Queenstown Office and Ngai Tahu Tourism's Shotover [River] Jet operations.
- DOC is responsible for the management of the marginal strip.
- The area where the tree was located was historically used by Shotover Jet customers and other members of the public as a viewing area.
- The immediate cause of the accident was found to be a combination of very strong, gusty winds on the day, and an aging tree with a decaying root-base sitting in sandy soils.
- An inspection carried out by a qualified arborist on the day of the accident found the fault in the tree was in the root-ball which was below ground level and not likely to have been identified during any maintenance checks.
- We are working with other occupiers/leaseholders operating in the Morningstar Reserve, including Shotover Jet and GO Orange Rafting, to review health and safety plans and procedures applicable to the safe management of the reserve, including hazard identification processes and clarity around roles, responsibilities and obligations to staff and visitors. Visitors safety is paramount for all operators.
- An arborist assessment of other trees within the reserve has been completed and the recommended remedial works commenced on 30 May.
- We continue to work closely with the affected family to ensure they have access to the full range of support required to get through the healing process.
- We are also working with Ngai Tahu Tourism to prepare a media release of the findings of the investigation in the first week of June.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.9 Commemoration of mass sperm whale/parāoa stranding in Taranaki

- 24 May marked one year since the mass sperm whale/parāoa stranding at Kaupokonui in Taranaki.
- To commemorate the event, DOC joined local Ngāti Tū hapū members and northern kaitiaki who had travelled down with Ngātiwai tohunga Hori Parata to lead the hauhake/harvest of cultural materials from the whales.
- Time was spent remembering the occasion and reflecting on significant events that had occurred in the lives of those present over the past year. All had a story of the profound affect the stranding had had on their lives.

- The commemoration also provided the opportunity to whakawhanaungatanga/ build relationships between the department and South Taranaki iwi/hapū through mahitahi/working together.
- The stranding strengthened interest in marine mammals among iwi of Taranaki. On 13 June, Ngāti Ruanui will host a wananga (Ngā Taonga Tohora) to work towards a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of hapū, iwi and DOC, including management and cultural recovery response to a stranding. DOC will present on scientific considerations, legal framework and protocols, and relationships with tangata whenua.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.10 Update on Conservation Week 2019 stakeholder functions

- As part of Conservation Week (14 – 22 September), stakeholder functions will be held throughout the country. Such events provide an opportunity for sharing key messages with our stakeholders via representatives of the senior leadership team.
- Heads of government departments, local government, business, community and iwi leaders will be invited to each networking event which will offer short presentations and the opportunity to showcase local conservation initiatives.
- The Loder Cup award will also be presented during Conservation Week. A stakeholder function will be hosted by the New Zealand Conservation Authority in the region of the winner.
- Planning for the stakeholder functions is well under way, with dates and venues confirmed for Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Hokitika as follows:
 - Auckland - 17 September at Kelly Tarlton's Sea Life Aquarium. The event will have a marine focus and include a discussion on the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.
 - Wellington - 18 September at Te Marae, Te Papa.
 - Christchurch - 17 September at the International Antarctic Centre. This event is in partnership with Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA). It will include the launch of a joint DOC – TIA programme to provide a way for tourism operators and commercial partners to contribute to conservation projects.
 - The Western South Island - 20 September at the West Coast Events Centre, Shantytown Heritage Park.
 - The Northern North Island, Hauraki-Waikato-Taranaki, Central North Island, Northern South Island, and Southern South Island - dates and venues yet to be confirmed. We will keep your office updated.
- Please advise if you wish to attend any of the stakeholder functions noted so far, or would like further information.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

June

6 June	LGNZ Rural and Provincial CE's meeting, Wellington
6 June	Ngāi Tahu/DOC Governance meeting, Christchurch
12 June	DOC Matariki stakeholders BBQ, DOC Wellington
13 June	State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Ohariu Farm
17 June	NZ Conservation Authority meeting, Wellington
18 June	DOC Senior Leaders hui, Wellington
19 June	Tourism CE's Quarterly Meeting, Wellington
19 June	Central and Local Government Forum, Premier House, Wellington
20 June	Environment Select Committee Estimates Hearing, Wellington
21 June–1 July	DG on annual leave, Martin Kessick acting DG

July

3 July	2019 Public Service Leaders' Summit, Wellington
4–5 July	SLT Retreat, Pounui Homestead, Wairarapa
11 July	ENGO Forum, DOC Wellington
12 July	Whenua Hau book launch, Bluff
13 July	Predator Free Rakiura MOU signing, Rakiura
20–27 July	Te Hono Boot Camp, Stanford University
31 July	Senior Leaders hui, Wellington

August

1 August	Holiday Parks Conference, Te Papa, Wellington
7 August	Chief Executives Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington
7 August	MOU Regional Councils/DOC meeting, DOC Wellington
14-15 August	EDS Conference "Rethinking Landscape in Aotearoa", Auckland
18 August	Conservation Board Chairs meeting, Wellington
21 August	Nga Whenua Rahui Komiti Meeting, Wellington

4 Addendum

None this week

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

None this week



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Week beginning: 10 June 2019

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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Kauri dieback

- The Head of Biosecurity NZ has recently updated the Kauri Dieback Governance Group on Biosecurity NZ's commitment to progressing its work with programme partners and identifying options to progress the National Pest Management Plan and the management agency.
- Biosecurity NZ's role will continue to focus on education, community engagement and awareness.
- We are currently undertaking our prioritisation process for 2019/20, to be confirmed in July.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.2 Myrtle rust

- We are working with MPI on prioritisation of work for myrtle rust for 2019/20, to be confirmed in July.

Contact: [REDACTED]

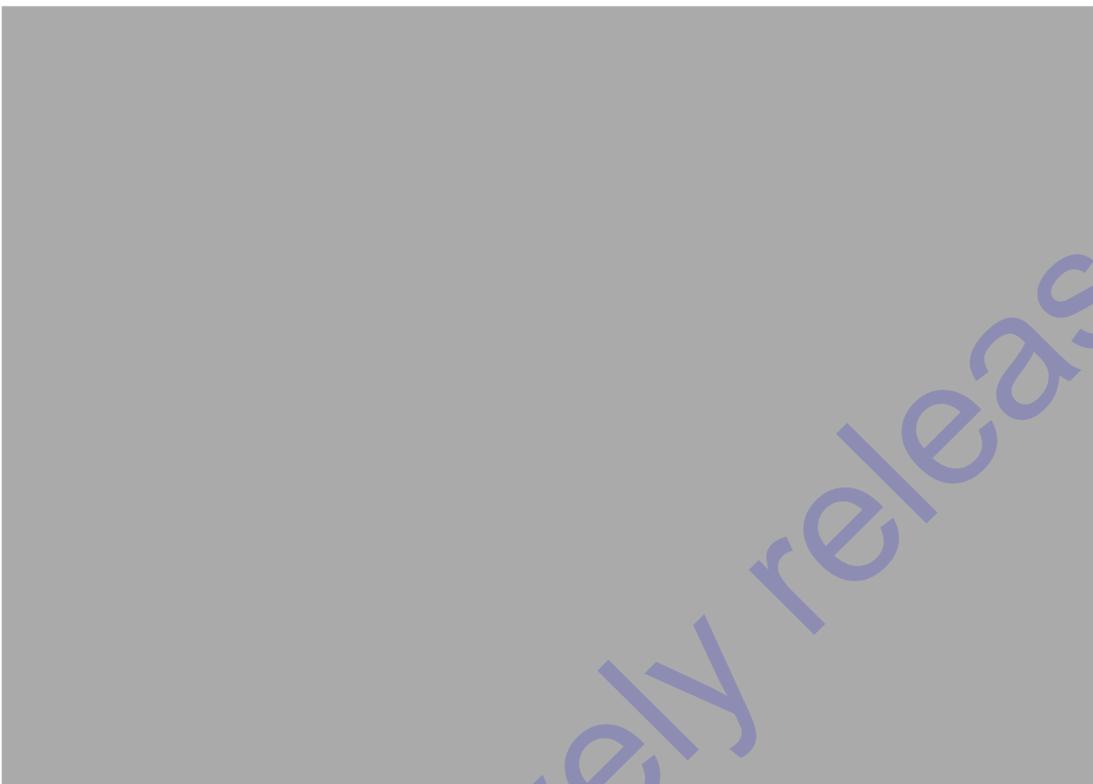
2 Updates

2.1 Contributions to Pacific initiatives

- Our International Team is in the final stages of disbursing initial funding to progress implementation of DOC's "Pacific Strategy 2018-2022". The initiatives are:
 - "Save the Manumea" campaign – This aims to protect Samoa's critically endangered national bird, the manumea. The Samoan Conservation Society is working closely with Samoa's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) to develop social media messages for this campaign which has been endorsed by the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa.
 - Strengthening implementation of CITES – Supporting representatives from the Government of Vanuatu (and DOC staff) to participate in a workshop led by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) on strengthening implementation of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 17 – 19 June.
 - Invasive species management – Supporting BirdLife International in ongoing work in Fatu Hiva and Tahiti (French Polynesia), and in East Rennell World Heritage Area (Solomon Islands) to manage invasive species in these fragile areas.

- Each initiative is aligned with the NZ Government's Pacific Reset principles, and involves supporting partners in the Pacific with whom DOC has an existing relationship, or where DOC has received assurance by a third party working with that organisation.

Contact: [REDACTED]



2.3 National Plan of Action Sharks

- In response to memo 19-B-0101 'New Zealand domestic shark finning policy', you requested an update on progress toward the review of the National Plan of Action for Sharks (NPOA)
- The first meeting of the advisory group was held on 6 June to discuss scope, outputs and timelines for the NPOA review. Staff from DOC's Marine Ecosystem and Marine Policy teams attended.
- Fisheries New Zealand anticipate three document outputs from the review; a summary of progress against the NPOA-Sharks 2013, an updated NPOA-Sharks 2020, and an updated five-year implementation plan.
- Work that will feed into the review is under way at Fisheries New Zealand, including a review of the 2014 shark finning ban and a review of progress against objectives outlined in the NPOA-Sharks 2013.
- Once the updated plan is in place, the advisory group will meet annually to assess progress against the five-year objectives in the new NPOA, which will help maintain the five-yearly review commitment going forward.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 Mackenzie Agency Alignment Programme – release of gap analysis report

- The five Mackenzie Alignment Agencies (DOC, LINZ, ECAN, and the Mackenzie and Waitaki district councils) recently commissioned an independent gap analysis by Boffa Miskell to determine the level of alignment between the various RMA instruments and plans that operate across the Mackenzie Basin.
- The analysis assesses the degree to which the various RMA plans deal with four key issues in the Basin: the protection of outstanding natural landscapes, biodiversity, land use change and water quality.
- While the report identified some alignment between these plans, it also identified gaps. This information will be used to assist with closing those gaps as both the Mackenzie and Waitaki district councils enter their district plan review processes.
- The alignment agencies plan to publicly release the gap analysis report in the near future. You will receive a copy of the report directly from ECAN Chief Executive Bill Bayfield, prior to its public release.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Milford Sound Aerodrome – future ownership and management

- The following update is provided for your information, in the event of the topic being raised with you by stakeholders.
- The Milford Sound Aerodrome is located within Fiordland National Park. The assets of the aerodrome are owned by the Ministry of Transport (MoT) and the underlying land is managed by DOC. Airways provides a flight information service for users of the aerodrome.
- Prompted by the MoT, in 2018 a project was undertaken by the above three agencies to determine the agency best suited to own the assets of the aerodrome and manage the day to day activities. The report clearly indicated that this would be DOC.
- Prior to accepting a transfer of assets from MoT, we have contracted specialist advice from a consultant to advise on the best mechanism to manage the operations of the aerodrome over the next five years.
- The Milford Opportunities project is considering the strategy at Milford Sound, and the Fiordland National Park Management Plan is due for review. When those two processes have been completed, should we accept transfer of the assets from the MoT, we would then be in a position to determine the long-term management options.
- We are engaging with our Treaty Partner on this topic and our consultant is engaging with stakeholders.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 Pricing reviews for Permissions

- DOC manages 4500 permissions across New Zealand. This includes establishing appropriate market fees payable to the Crown. Our role is to ensure that where permissions are granted, an appropriate market fee is paid for the right to conduct commercial activities.
- To ensure standardisation and consistency of fees, we operate a 'Price Book'. The Price Book details standard fees for a range of activity types, such as

Grazing, Guiding, Easements etc. When setting a fee for an individual permission, we use the Price Book, as well as the particular circumstances of a permission, to set the fee. Support is provided from our Pricing and Economics team. Where we have a high value or unique activity, we may use the services of an external Valuer. This occurs approximately 15 times per year.

- We have an ongoing programme of work to review the various categories of the Price Book. We are currently reviewing Telecommunications, Guiding and Aircraft Landings.
- We have now released our proposed fees for Telecommunications. Consultation has occurred with permission holders, industry groups and MBIE. These fees will now be applied to an individual permission as its regular three-yearly fee review occurs, and to any new permissions that are granted.
- MBIE has advised that it has briefed the Minister of Broadcasting, Communications and Digital Media on our work, in case any concerns are raised with him by concessionaires that are in line for a fee increase. Minister Faafoi may raise this with you. We are not expecting significant issues as we have undertaken comprehensive consultation and discussion with those affected.
- The next activity types to be reviewed will be Guiding and Aircraft Landings. We are working closely with Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) on these and will also undertake a consultation process with permission holders. We expect this consultation to commence within the next month.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.7 Booking Services Programme

- The purpose of this item is to update you on DOC's Booking Services Programme. We last updated you in 2018, following the successful launch of Great Walks on the new booking system.
- The Booking Services Programme is a multi-year programme to deliver a range of benefits, including:
 - Improved customer experience
 - Improved Health and Safety for staff and customers
 - Increased flexibility for pricing and products
 - Increased sustainability / efficiency
- The first two phases of the programme have been completed and were funded from Budget '17. This included procuring a supplier and delivering the new Great Walks booking system which in turn supported the ability to trial differential pricing.
- During 2019, the focus will be on migrating huts and campsites to the new system and reducing or removing cash handling for field staff, as well as developing indicative Business Cases for:
 - Permits - Eight permits have been identified as being suitable for online processing, including drone, hunting, film, fishing aircraft and export permits.
 - Concession management - Ability to process concession applications online and collect revenue in real time. Can be applied to aircraft landings, road end concessions, short- and long-term concessions and guided walk concessions.
 - Point of Sale / E-Retail - Ability to sell DOC products online (pass products and a retail offer).
 - Benefits.

- The funding of the project for the future phases is not yet settled. The project will deliver significant benefits across DOC, and for many stakeholders. We would like to discuss future options with you.

Contact: Bruce Parkes, DDG Policy and Visitors: [REDACTED]

2.8 Kākāpō aspergillosis update

- 17 kākāpō (15 chicks, 2 adults) have received a preliminary diagnosis of aspergillosis infection. All birds are from Whenua Hou. This is a relatively new disease in kākāpō.
- Aspergillus spores are abundant in the environment and are typically inhaled. The spores usually cause disease only if individuals have reduced immunity and/or if there is an increased concentration of spores in the environment.
- The current hypothesis on the cause of this outbreak is that there is a significant spore loading in nests on Whenua Hou this season, coupled with possible nest stress, leading to infection. Other potential causes of low immunity are being investigated.
- The Kākāpō Recovery Team is working with Auckland Zoo, Massey Wildbase, Dunedin Wildlife Hospital and Wellington Zoo to understand the underlying cause of aspergillosis, and to prevent future cases where possible.
- The highest risk birds have been identified and sent for further testing and all remaining chicks in nests have been removed for hand-rearing to prevent further exposure to high spore loading.
- A disease surveillance programme, to determine highest priority birds for CT scans for the remainder of the Whenua Hou population, is well under way.
- This involves undertaking diagnostics such as weight, physical examination and blood sample collection from all birds, beginning with those prioritised as most at risk.
- Further diagnostic samples are being taken to quantify the spore levels in nests and to detect the presence of possible underlying viral or bacterial infections.
- Six kākāpō (four chicks, two adults) have died of aspergillosis since 18 April. The latest death was on 23 May.
- We have responded to public enquiries and offers of support by providing a specific 'aspergillosis' tag to an existing public donation mechanism for kākāpō.
- We will provide you with a full update on the disease surveillance programme during your visit to Whenua Hou on 15-16 June.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

June

12 June	DOC Matariki stakeholders BBQ, DOC Wellington
13 June	State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Ohariu Farm
17 June	NZ Conservation Authority meeting, Wellington
18 June	DOC Senior Leaders hui, Wellington
19 June	Tourism CE's Quarterly Meeting, Wellington
19 June	Central and Local Government Forum, Premier House, Wellington
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21 June–1 July	DG on annual leave, Martin Kessick acting DG

July

3 July	2019 Public Service Leaders' Summit, Wellington
4–5 July	SLT Retreat, Pounui Homestead, Wairarapa
9 July	The Aotearoa Circle Trust Partnership Workshop, Government House
11 July	ENGO Forum, DOC Wellington
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4 Addendum

None this week



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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Kauri Dieback

- On 21 June, there will be a mural (Te Wao Tapu Nui o Tāne Mahuta - the Domain of Tāne) unveiled in Katikati. The mural celebrates te kaimai kauri and their future protection.
- We will be providing you with a briefing on 14 June, with an update for your estimates meeting on 17 June. [19-B-0430 refers.]

Contact: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

1.2 Myrtle Rust

- There is no myrtle rust update this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

1.3 RMA Advocacy Update

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

Declarations

None this week.

Submissions

- On 5 June, we lodged comments for first schedule consultation on ECan (Environment Canterbury) Plan Change 7B (Orari, Opihi, Temuka and Pareora). We sought, generally, to support staged increases in minimum flows, enhanced flow connectivity and variability on the Opihi River, and the improvement of river health in the bottom of the catchment. The comments sought:
 - clarification on the methods used for water restrictions
 - codification of the factors to be taken into account when considering restrictions
 - improved fish screening provisions
 - inclusion of a rule to give effect to a policy on a common consent expiry date
 - justification for some minimum flows being set below the lowest recorded flow.

Appeals

- We attended mediation on the West Coast Regional Policy Statement for the chapters covering Indigenous Biodiversity, Natural Character, and Natural Features and Landscapes. The Director-General is an appellant and party to provisions in these chapters.
- Particular areas covered during this round of mediation included:
 - the objective and policy framework for outstanding, significant and other values
 - biodiversity offsetting and compensation
 - offsetting for activities within outstanding natural landscapes and features
 - offsetting within areas of natural, and outstanding natural character

- overlap with the Land and Water provisions to ensure that indigenous biodiversity and natural character are addressed.
- As a result of this mediation, the West Coastal Regional Council will undertake significant redrafting of the chapters prior to a third round of mediation, to be set in late-July/ early August.
- We decided not to join any appeals to Stage 2 of the Queenstown Lakes District Plan. Most of our submissions were accepted or accepted in part by the Council Hearing commissioners. Items that we investigated as potentially significant enough to warrant joining the appeal were stock access and earthworks in ski field area zones.

Designations

None this week.

Water Conservation Orders

None this week.

Other

- Preparatory work between DOC's policy and operations teams has been initiated to establish discussion points for a future meeting with the Canterbury Regional Council Commissioner as part of the Minister for the Environment's investigation of the Otago Regional Council that was announced on 16 May, focusing on the Arrow, Cardrona, and Manuherikia rivers.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 PF2050 Community update

- The PF2050 Communities team is preparing a booklet – “Practical Guide to Trapping”, to be available for launch in August. This is a practical, factual guide outlining best practice for traps, monitoring, and how to set-up trap lines and record data, etc. It will be a great resource for the two-day Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) Introduction to Predator Trapping Methods course, and the myriad of trap workshops held across the country. There will be an opportunity for you to launch the guide.
- The NMIT Introduction to Predator Trapping Methods course has proven popular. More than 70 participants have been through the course to date, with a further six-to-seven courses to run this calendar year. The first Auckland course is coming up in July and is fully booked.
- The team is currently updating the on-line community toolkit and aligning it to complement the PFNZ Trust on-line shop and resources pages.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 Wairoa Gorge gifting

- We are nearing completion of the proposed land gifting to DOC of the 860-hectare Wairoa Gorge property, owned by international investor, Ken Dart by RHL NZ Limited (RHL). [Status Report 47 - week beginning 22 October 2018 refers]
- The Director-General has provided provisional approval to enter into the sale and purchase agreement with RHL for the gifting to DOC of land with reserve values.

- Transfer is proposed for 26 June, subject to all conditions being met and approvals being obtained.
- RHL has requested a joint media release with you and the Nelson Mountain Bike Club and we will work with your office on this.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 New Great Walk: Paparoa

- The first new Great Walk in over 20 years, the Paparoa Track, opened for bookings on 12 June.
- The full track is scheduled for completion by 1 December.
- Western South Island had an impressive response to opening day bookings for the new Great Walk, resulting in a revenue of \$168,000, mostly from New Zealanders.
- This is well within the range of other Great Walks opening day bookings, and exceeds figures for the Heaphy Track for both 2018 and 2019.
- The table below shows opening day bookings for our newest Great Walk, in comparison with the Heaphy Track for the last two years. Figures for the Milford Track are also included for comparison, as it represents one of the most popular Great Walks.

Great Walk	Paparoa Track	Heaphy Track	Heaphy Track	Milford Track
Date of Opening Day Bookings	12 June 2019	11 June 2019	June 2018	11 June 2019
Opening Day Bookings	564	476	326	1,978
Opening Day Revenue (excl GST)	\$167,850	\$139,131	\$87,521	\$1,461,791 (track) \$416,733 (transport)
New Zealanders	91%	81%	84%	53%
International Visitors	9%	19%	16%	47%

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

June

17 June	NZ Conservation Authority meeting, Wellington
18 June	DOC Senior Leaders hui, Wellington
19 June	Tourism CE's Quarterly Meeting, Wellington
19 June	Central and Local Government Forum, Premier House, Wellington
20 June	Environment Select Committee Estimates Hearing, Wellington
21 June–1 July	DG on annual leave, Martin Kessick acting DG

July

3 July	2019 Public Service Leaders' Summit, Wellington
4–5 July	SLT Retreat, Pounui Homestead, Wairarapa
9 July	The Aotearoa Circle Trust Partnership Workshop, Government House
11 July	ENGO Forum, DOC Wellington
12 July	Whenua Hau book launch, Bluff
13 July	Predator Free Rakiura MOU signing, Rakiura
20–27 July	Te Hono Boot Camp, Stanford University
31 July	Senior Leaders hui, Wellington

August

1 August	Holiday Parks Conference, Te Papa, Wellington
7 August	Chief Executives Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington
7 August	MOU Regional Councils/DOC meeting, DOC Wellington
14-15 August	EDS Conference "Rethinking Landscape in Aotearoa", Auckland
18 August	Conservation Board Chairs meeting, Wellington
21 August	Nga Whenua Rahui Komiti Meeting, Wellington

4 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:

- Potential PGF Funding

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

See item 2.2



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 24 June 2019

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Proactively released

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Kauri Dieback

- There are no specific updates this week. We will be keeping you updated over the next few weeks on track closures that are being considered in the Bay of Islands.
- We continue to work with MPI on clarity for the next steps of the programme's work and the National Pest Management Plan.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.2 Myrtle Rust

- No updates this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.3 RMA Advocacy Update

DOC is considering the following RMA decisions:

Declarations

None this week.

Submissions

- We lodged draft comments (not a formal submission) on Outstanding Water Bodies - Plan Change 7 for the Hawke's Bay Regional Resource Management Plan on 14 June.

Appeals

None this week.

Designations

None this week.

Water Conservation Orders

None this week.

Other

None this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 Pacific Reset and resilient ecosystems

- Our International Team has been working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) to ensure that ecosystem resilience is duly acknowledged in the delivery of the Government's Pacific Reset.

- [Redacted]

- This approach is in keeping with DOC's Pacific Strategy and our initial focus on building capacity in invasive species management.

- [Redacted]

Contact: [Redacted]



2.3 New Zealand sea lion captured by a fishing vessel (SQU6T)

- Fisheries NZ has notified DOC of the capture of a dead female sea lion in a squid fishing vessel net on 17 June. Two Fisheries NZ observers were on board.
- The vessel was operating to the south east of the Auckland Islands and using a SLED. The sea lion was found in front of the SLED.
- Six sea lions have been found dead in the SQU6T fishing vessel fleet in the current fishing year. This is the first sea lion mortality after an unusually high number of

captures were reported between 17 January and 9 February this year, three male and two female sea lions.

- Fisheries NZ is currently leading the review of the SQU6T Operational Plan. DOC has been part of the SQU6T Operational Plan Technical Advisory Group, and we will advise you of the preferred management options in the consultation document when it becomes available.

Contact: [REDACTED]



2.5 New population of Haast tokoeka discovered

- The Haast tokoeka (Nationally Critical) is our most endangered taxon of kiwi, with an estimated 450 birds, only, thought to be left in the wild
- DOC's national monitoring programme measures the status of biodiversity at a national level from over 1300 sites. This programme deploys acoustic recorders over 24 hours at each plot to monitor birds during the day, and bats and kiwi during the night.
- A kiwi call was detected outside of the known range of the tokoeka kiwi (an estimated 50km north of the known range for Fiordland tokoeka, and about 20km south of the known range for Haast tokoeka).
- The Haast tokoeka kiwi team surveyed the site in April and detected at least 14 different birds, and successfully caught five. We are confident there are more birds at

the site. The funding for the survey was provided by the Save Our Iconic Kiwi programme.

- The genetic analysis of the feathers collected has confirmed that this population aligns with Haast tokoeka, which makes it a very important contributor to Haast tokoeka recovery.
- This discovery not only boosts the known population by three to five percent. but more significantly, these birds add important new genetic diversity to this rare taxon.
- We will work with Makaawhio to develop a management plan for this population.
- We are aware that you are on the West Coast on 4 July, and this may be an opportunity for you to announce the discovery, should you see value in doing so. We will work with your office to coordinate any announcement.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.6 Tiakina Nga Manu Update

- Unsettled weather through May delayed some aerial 1080 drops, but all operations are currently within acceptable time frames.
- Bait is currently being laid in Abel Tasman, Kahurangi, Mt Egmont and Westland national parks, with the latter being part of Zero Invasive Predators research in the Perth catchment.
- You were recently quoted in the media, noting that our predator control operations would only go ahead if rodent triggers were met.
- Based on rodent monitoring across the country through May, all planned operations (except one) have passed rodent trigger levels as predicted and will go ahead.
- Wet Jacket, in Fiordland National Park, did not reach its trigger level so has been postponed until Autumn 2020.
- It is unclear why rodents have been slow to increase at this site.
- Wet Jacket is part of an intensively monitored Save Our Iconic Kiwi research project and we expect to gain more knowledge about predator/prey dynamics in this forest over time.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.7 Tahr programme update

- DOC has been controlling tahr beyond the feral range on public conservation land throughout May and June. Areas targeted include the Spenser Mountains, Ashburton Lakes, Mt Hutt, Dunstan Range, Oteake Conservation Park, Eyre Mountains, Thomson Range and the Northern and Southern Exclusion Zones.
- From 1 July, tahr control will focus on all seven tahr management units to enable the targets within the Tahr Control Operational Plan 2018/2019 to be met. This will comprise a combination of contract and DOC control, along with aerially assisted trophy hunting environmental contributions.
- The request for tender for contract tahr control has resulted in a single contract being awarded to control and possibly recover tahr across two management units.
- The national tahr programme team met in the week of 17 June to review work to date and to finalise planning for the beginning of intensive tahr control.

- In the week of 24 June, we will be proactively pitching stories to local media in communities where tahr control will be taking place. These stories will focus on the impacts of tahr on vegetation and will remind people of the work DOC and stakeholders are doing to reduce the population to within the limits of the Himalayan Tahr Control Plan 1993. We will work with your office on this.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.8 Ruahine Forest Park public access concerns – potential media campaign

- DOC's Manawatu office has received an email from a member of the public advising his intention to instigate a media campaign to highlight public access issues in the Ruahine Ranges.
- Access to 19 entry points to the western side of the Ruahine Ranges is across private land, with tracks at these points built largely by the New Zealand Forest Service.
- DOC and the New Zealand Walking Access Commission have been working with private landowners to formalise public access arrangements, but obtaining landowners' agreement to public access across their land has not been successful in all cases. There are 10 access points with restricted or conditional public access.
- While DOC continues to work with the Walking Access Commission and private landowners to secure public access to sites in the Ruahine Ranges, this lack of access is a source of frustration for recreational users, and has been the subject of an article in Wilderness Magazine in 2018 and submissions to the Wellington CMS.
- The Operations Manager Manawatu and Director Lower North Island are meeting with the person concerned to understand his proposed solution. We will keep you updated on the outcomes of this meeting.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.9 Two South-East Marine Protection process reviews

Independent review of the project

- In June 2018, DOC commissioned the Caravel Group to undertake an independent review of the project that supported the South-East Marine Protection Forum process.
- Project evaluation and review is part of standard DOC project management practice. The learnings from the Caravel review are intended to inform future marine protection work.
- The review process involved workshops and interviews with members of the Forum, as well as with the project team and governance group from DOC, Fisheries New Zealand and Ngāi Tahu.
- The group provided DOC with a report on its findings on 17 May.
- Subject to the outcomes of consultation, we are not proposing to withhold any information from the report when it is released on the DOC website on, or before 1 July. We believe its findings may generate some public interest and have prepared reactive media communications for its release.
- We currently have two requests for the report under the OIA, with responses due by 1 July.
- Should you require it, we can provide you with a copy of the report and/or a briefing on the review.

Office of the Auditor-General review

- The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) has audited DOC's marine reserve processes, using the Forum and Te Korowai as case studies.

- DOC provided feedback to the OAG on its preliminary findings and draft report.
- We understand the OAG intends to provide its findings to Parliament later in June, after which the findings will be publicly released.
- We are working on a communications strategy relating to the public release of the audit findings.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.10 Otago Regional Council Freshwater Planning Review

- Minister Parker has used his powers under s24A of the Resource Management Act to appoint Peter Skelton, former Environment Court judge and current ECan appointed councillor, to investigate whether the Otago Regional Council (ORC) is on track to adequately perform its functions in relation to freshwater management and allocation of resources.
- This investigation commences in July and is to be completed by 3 September. The investigation's scope includes the adequacy of the current planning framework, adequacy of ORC's RMA performance in relation to the expiry of formerly perpetual mining privileges in October 2021, adequacy of ORC resources, Treaty partner and stakeholder views, and any other relevant contextual matters.
- Mr Skelton's terms of reference specifically include meeting with DOC as a key party to freshwater planning in Otago.
- A meeting is set down for 10 July, in Dunedin.
- Mr Skelton will pre-circulate a set of questions, but we are preparing for these at present. We will provide you with a short briefing on the points we propose to make by early July.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.11 Update on Heritage & Visitors Strategy

- Work to finalise the new Heritage and Visitors Strategy is ongoing. The draft document was signed off by the Minister of Finance and you last year. Since that time, work has been delayed by the development and launch of the New Zealand-Aotearoa Tourism Strategy, but has now recommenced.
- DOC's main concern has been how to ensure the strategy is a valuable operational document for everyday use by decision-makers. To do this, we have decided to produce two final documents which together will form the strategy.
- The first will be a Strategic Document which covers the goals, actions and framework for the strategy. This is designed to be the go-to for everyday guidance on decision making.
- The second will be a document tentatively titled "Journey to the Strategy". It will include all of the context, analysis and case studies from the approved draft strategy. This is designed to be a reference document to explain the thinking behind the strategy.
- There are no changes to the strategic direction set out in the approved draft that was signed off last year.
- We will circulate completed drafts of both documents to stakeholders (including Tourism Industry Aotearoa, Federated Mountain Clubs and Recreation Aotearoa) in mid-July, and will reengage with iwi on the updated strategy through July and August.
- Based on this timeline, we anticipate delivery of a final version of the strategy for your approval by November.

- The draft document approved last year has also been circulated to conservation boards for feedback. We will consider how to reflect this feedback within the final strategy.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.12 Progress update on Mackenzie/Aoraki long-term visitor management plan

- This is an update on progress since the memo provided to you on 23 May (19-B-0272 refers).
- The aim of the long-term visitor management plan is for visitor pressures to be sustainably managed with a strategic and integrated response, while realising opportunities for conservation, visitors and the community.
- The governance group established to oversee the work is made up of senior representatives from the Mackenzie District Council, the Mackenzie Development Group, the MBIE, the NZTA, LINZ, DOC and Ngāi Tahu. It held its first meeting on 7 June.
- The group's collaborative approach supports the Five Agency Alignment goal (between Environment Canterbury, Mackenzie District Council, Waitaki District Council, LINZ and DOC) to provide better quality service as we carry out our various functions.
- Mr Tony Shaw, a senior Timaru lawyer, has been appointed as independent chair of the group.
- Officials are available to meet with you should you require further details on this matter.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.13 Geraldine (Orari) Racecourse – Appointment of Trustee

- This is a final update on the filling of a trustee vacancy on the Geraldine (Orari) Racecourse Board.
- On your recommendation the vacancy was publicly notified with applications closing on 28 September 2018.
- Three applications were received, one of which was subsequently withdrawn.
- DOC's Geraldine Operations Manager interviewed the two remaining applicants in May and made a recommendation on the applicant he considered most suitable.
- The Operations Director Eastern South Island independently reviewed all the material, including the original applications and the Operations Manager's recommendation.
- David John Lindsay Hay was appointed to the vacant trustee position by the Operations Director and the appointment was notified in the NZ Gazette on 12 June.
- Both applicants have been advised in writing of the outcome of the appointment process.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.14 PF2050 Community Rangers - update (North Island)

- We have been supporting the Northland Regional Council (NRC) to develop the Predator Free Ltd Provincial Growth Fund expression of interest for Predator Free Northland.
- We have been working collaboratively with NRC, Nga Whenua Rahui, Maori Trust Boards and other landowners to develop a collective plan for protecting forest health. Specific areas include Ipipiri (eastern Bay of Islands), Cape Brett/Russell Forest area and marae/hapu around Puketi/Omahuta Forest.
- We have been supporting Te Waka Kaitiaki Whenua – an education programme involving 30 Northland schools. Stella Kake (who you met through Bay Bush Action) is delivering this programme, which has an emphasis on protecting our native taonga.
- Since April, the Auckland PF Ranger and team have delivered seven 'Introduction to Pest Animal Trapping' courses. The courses are generally attended by 10-20 people per session, many of whom are new to trapping. In light of requests for more courses in new locations, we will be reviewing the course with our partner, Auckland Council.
- We have finished piloting a new course for groups and individuals undertaking predator control in areas with kauri. This has been developed in partnership with Auckland Council. Three pilots have been delivered, and we are now refining the content, working out a process for certification and then looking to roll out a regular training programme with Auckland Council later this year.
- The team on Great Barrier Island completed its third successful check of Rakitu following the pest eradication last year.
- Auckland Council ran an autumn pest free Auckland campaign, piloting letter box stickers to encourage households to show their public commitment to being pest free.
- There are two regional Festival's happening in June (Rodney and Franklin). DOC will be at both and is delivering an iwi engagement workshop at the Franklin event. There will an Auckland Festival on 14 September.
- The Tongariro team found a record 8500 bats in our recent short-tailed bat monitoring exercise in Rangataua Forest. This is the largest population in the country, and is at threat from stoats, rats, possums and cats. Aerial 1080 is providing protection to this nationally important population. The next Rangataua (Southern Ruapehu) 1080 operation is due to start in August.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.15 Forthcoming publication on public opinion towards novel technologies for pest control

- A paper titled "Understanding attitudes on new technologies to manage invasive species" will shortly be published in *Pacific Conservation Biology*, with the lead author from Landcare Research and supporting author from DOC.
- The publication is part of the National Science Challenge - Biological Heritage project *Public perceptions of the use of novel pest control methods* which is led by DOC's manager of social science.
- The research used focus groups to explore key stakeholders' views on novel pest control methods, including gene drive and trojan female techniques.
- The results are helping those involved in pest control to better understand and empathise with the New Zealand public's concerns about future pest control.
- This paper and the research it is based upon did not involve the use of questions relating to political ideology.

Contact: Martin Kessick, Deputy Director-General Biodiversity [REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

June

21 June–1 July DG on annual leave, Martin Kessick acting DG

July

3 July 2019 Public Service Leaders' Summit, Wellington

4–5 July SLT Retreat, Pounui Homestead, Wairarapa

9 July The Aotearoa Circle Trust Partnership Workshop, Government House

11 July ENGO Forum, DOC Wellington

12 July Whenua Hau book launch, Bluff

13 July Predator Free Rakiura MOU signing, Rakiura

20–27 July Te Hono Boot Camp, Stanford University

31 July Senior Leaders hui, Wellington

August

1 August Holiday Parks Conference, Te Papa, Wellington

7 August Chief Executives Environment and Economy Forum, Wellington

7 August MOU Regional Councils/DOC meeting, DOC Wellington

14-15 August EDS Conference "Rethinking Landscape in Aotearoa", Auckland

18 August Conservation Board Chairs meeting, Wellington

21 August Nga Whenua Rahui Komiti Meeting, Turangi

22 August State Services Leadership Team Retreat, Ohariu Farm

4 Addendum

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Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Decision to restrict permits for dolphin interaction and investigate marine mammal sanctuary in Bay of Islands
- Molesworth proposed management plan review update

Events, Announcements & Media Opportunities

None this week.