



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

In-Confidence

Department of Conservation Status Report

Week beginning: 2 December 2019

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Seen by Hon Eugenie Sage
Minister of Conservation

Productively released

1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 RMA advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

Submissions

Proposed New Plymouth District Plan

- New Plymouth District Council notified their proposed district plan on 23 September 2019.
- We have lodged a submission focussed on: energy, natural landscapes and features, natural character, waterbodies, coastal environment, indigenous biodiversity and subdivision.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.2 Kauri dieback and myrtle rust

- There are no updates on kauri dieback or myrtle rust this week.

Contact: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 Joint DOC/LINZ Crown Pastoral Land Act (CPLA) discretionary consents training

- In 2018 LINZ and DOC agreed to implementing a range of operational improvements, one of which was a commitment to joint training in the South Island high country.
- In December 2019, the second joint training programme for CPLA discretionary consents will be led by DOC and our Treaty partner, and will be attended by 30 staff from DOC, Ngāi Tahu and LINZ.
- The purpose of the training is to ensure shared understanding and better working relationships across both agencies when processing applications for discretionary activities on Crown pastoral leases.
- In February 2019, the first joint training session was held, targeting new DOC Officers, and new LINZ Portfolio Managers. The training covered both DOC and LINZ's roles and responsibilities within the CPLA and included one field day discussing activities that require consent. The training was delivered by DOC technical staff from district offices and the tenure review team.
- Since the first training programme in February, we have seen an increase in staff from both agencies jointly attending CPLA consent inspections.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.2 DOC Community Fund update

- Following your recent meeting with officials, we have taken on board your feedback for the upcoming round of the DOC Community Fund.
- The 2020 round of the DOC Community fund will open on 24 February and close on 24 March. \$4.6 million is available for community-led biodiversity projects on public and private land. A further \$1 million is available for established conservation hubs to build the capacity and capability of community groups.
- Forms and guidance documents for applicants are on the DOC website.
- We will liaise with your office to schedule meetings with you in April 2020 to discuss hub funding recommendations, and in May or June 2020 to discuss DOCCF funding recommendations (papers provided two weeks in advance).

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 Parliamentary Commissioner for Environment (PCE) speaking at a conference on Statistics in Ecology and Environmental Monitoring (SEEM)

- DOC has organised and will be chairing a session on Environmental Reporting at the SEEM conference, Victoria University, on 3 December. The PCE, Simon Upton, will be keynote speaker talking about his recent report.

Contact: [REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

December

- 3 December Senior Leaders Hui, Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club
- 4 December Breakfast with Minister of Conservation, Dillingers
- 5 December GNS Science Celebration, Te Papa
- 5 December Environment Select Committee Annual Review, Parliament, Wellington
- 5 December Meeting with Min Shane Jones, Bellamy's
- 5 December SSC End of Year Celebration, State Services Commission Wellington
- 6-9 December Chatham Islands visit with Partners/CEs, Chathams
- 10 December NZ Conservation Authority, Wellington
- 11 December Ngāi Tahu/DOC Governance Meeting, Ngāi Tahu Offices, Christchurch
- 13 December Meet with Kirsti Luke, Tūhoe, Whakatane
- 17 December DOC Wellington Xmas Party, Wellington

January

- 27 Jan–14 Feb Lou – Annual Leave, Rachel Bruce acting

February

- 13 February Chief Executive's Environmental and Economic Forum, Wellington
- 18 February DG Stakeholder BBQ, DOC Wellington
- 19 February DOC/FENZ Leadership Teams meeting Fire and Emergency, The Terrace Wellington
- 20 February State Sector Senior Leaders Retreat, Ohariu Wellington
- 21 February NZ Conservation Authority, DOC Wellington

Proactively released

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:

- MPA reform – update on engagement
- Tasman Mining Blackwater Gold Mine Exploration Project
- Pounamu Pathway PGF application update
- Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne Conservation Park Tiakina Ngā Manu predator operation
- Government response to the Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari Plan

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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Kauri dieback and myrtle rust

- [REDACTED]
- DOC staff attended and presented at the NZ Ecological Society conference on 2 December, which included a dedicated session on myrtle rust. The session gave a good overview of the disease, the current work in NZ and the learnings from Australia.

Contact: [REDACTED]

1.2 RMA advocacy

DOC's recent RMA work is as follows:

Submissions

New Zealand King Salmon 'Blue Endeavour' Open Water Salmon Farm, Cook Strait

- New Zealand King Salmon (NZKS) has applied to establish a marine farm between 6-12 nautical miles due north of Cape Lambert.
- The area sought by NZKS in the consent application covers 1,792 ha.
- NZKS propose to pilot different pen types and operate a staged development.
- The Director-General has submitted in opposition to the application, seeking that it be declined as:
 - The application will allow NZKS to expand and modify the activity beyond the scope of what has been evaluated in the assessment of environmental effects;
 - It does not adequately model or address the adverse effects associated with the activity;
 - There is potential for significant adverse effects on the marine environment, particularly in relation to the discharge and effects on seafloor communities; and
 - Proposed mitigation and monitoring measures are considered inadequate.

Alliance Maitai Water Permits, Southland

- Alliance Maitai meat works is seeking permits for water diversions, takes and discharges within the Maitai River for plant cooling and washdown.
- The Director-General submitted in opposition based on the following matters:
 - Alliance's discharges contribute to the cumulative degradation of the waterway and we consider these effects have been inadequately assessed.
 - The area of discharge is within a Māitai reserve of high significance to Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.
 - The Maitai River catchment flows to the Awarua Wetland RAMSAR site which is showing evidence of degradation.
 - Downstream of the discharge site supports a large population of longfin eels and spawning areas for lamprey. The strength of the lamprey population at this location makes it a nationally significant site from a species conservation perspective.
 - The application as presented is not in accordance with Part 2 of the Act, NPS-FM or Southland's planning documents.

Eastern Bays Shared Path, Wellington Harbour

- Hutt City Council has applied for resource consent to construct a 4.4km shared walking and cycling path along the shore of the Eastern Bays of Wellington Harbour. The proposal includes seawall construction and replacement, reclamation, and beach nourishment at three sites.
- The Director-General has submitted in opposition to the proposal on the basis that the potential adverse effects on seagrass, foraging habitat for shorebirds, and nesting habitat for Little Blue Penguins need to be adequately avoided, remedied, mitigated or offset.
- It is our opinion that these measures should be required as conditions of the resource consents and not left to management plans which do not include public input, should the Council grant the consents.

Further Submissions

Horizons One Plan – Plan Change 2 (existing intensive land uses)

- Horizons Regional Council have released submissions on Plan Change 2 to the Horizons Regional One Plan: Water.
- Plan Change 2 seeks amendments to address issues with the One Plan's nutrient management policies and rule framework, to manage effects of land uses and discharges on water quality in the region, while balancing productive farming with freshwater quality.
- The Director-General lodged a submission in opposition of the plan change in October for the following reasons:
 - The policies and rules are very permissive and will allow land uses to leach nitrogen so long as they implement good management practices;
 - The plan change will result in a further decline in freshwater quality; and
 - It is inconsistent with the national policy direction on freshwater.
- The Director-General will lodge a further submission on other submissions consistent with this position to oppose any inappropriate relief, and support relief which improves certainty of positive freshwater outcomes.

Appeals

Proposed Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki – joining appeals

- You lodged an appeal on the Proposed Coastal Plan for Taranaki in mid-November on the basis that it did not address the concerns set out in your submission, and expert evidence presented at the Council hearing on your behalf.
- The appeal sought:
 - The improved management of vehicles in the coastal marine area;
 - That Council map and identify areas of significant indigenous biodiversity; and
 - Other changes to policies and objectives to give effect to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010.
- Nine other parties have lodged appeals on the coastal plan. We have reviewed these appeals and intend to join the following five appeals as an interested party:
 - Forest and Bird
 - Petroleum Exploration and Production Association of NZ
 - Transpower
 - Energy Watch Taranaki
 - Fonterra

Contact:

2 Updates

2.1 Differential Pricing Trial 2019/20

- The trial is progressing well, with feedback and information coming in from visitors and operations staff across the Great Walks.
- We will provide you with a Great Walks Differential Pricing Trial 2019/20 dashboard before the end of the year including data as of 30 November.
- We will provide you with a briefing paper on the results of the trial on 2 April to inform your decision on differential pricing as a tool. We will be available to discuss this paper with you.
- We hope to receive your decision on differential pricing by 1 May, to provide a window to update our booking engine before bookings open for the 2020/21 Great Walks season.

Contact: _____

2.2 Meeting with Waitangi National Trust regarding World Heritage status

- Following your engagement with the Waitangi National Trust, officials from DOC and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage are meeting the Trust on 13 December to discuss what a co-designed process to progress this nomination could look like.
- We will ensure the Trust knows that no decision has been made on progressing the nomination at this stage.
- We will update you following the meeting.

Contact: _____

2.3 DOC to open Cape Kidnappers reserve and access to gannet colony

- Access to the Cape Kidnappers gannet colony via the beach has been closed since January 2019 following a significant landslide that seriously injured two overseas visitors.
- We are working to re-open the DOC reserve before Christmas pending DOC review of the Quantitative Risk Assessment (QRA) report and completion of the incident investigation report actions.
- On 9 December, the DDG - Operations will make the final decision to re-open or not before your visit to the Hawkes Bay on 13 December.
- If the Cape Kidnappers Walk is reopened, it will not be promoted as part of the Day Hike product set. The walk will be on the DOC/ Hastings District Council (HDC) websites with all the warning information.
- We are working with HDC to ensure appropriate risk management of hazards associated with the trip to the gannet colony. This includes landslide/rockfall and avoiding being caught by the tide.
- The QRA technical report provides a quantitative assessment of the landslide / rockfall hazard. GNS peer reviewed the report and confirmed the calculations and conclusions.
- The key actions being put in place are:

- Determine the level of risk associated with a trip along the beach (completed);
 - Design and install signs that warn people of the significant hazards associated with the rip (in progress);
 - Monitor the condition of the cliffs and enact temporary closure as required (planned); and
 - Monitor the effectiveness of the new signs (planned).
- The operator using tractor and trailer units to take clients along the beach has not been operating since the landslide in January. It is unclear when and if they can commence operations.
 - This operator has expressed concerns in the media at the way that the closure of access by DOC has been managed. The Operations Manager is organising to meet with the transport operator to discuss the opening of the reserve and any outstanding issues.

Contact:

3 Director-General Engagements

December

6-9 December	Chatham Islands visit with Partners/CEs Chathams
10 December	NZ Conservation Authority, Wellington
11 December	Ngāi Tahu/DOC Governance Meeting, Ngāi Tahu Offices Christchurch
13 December	Meet with Kirsti Luke, Tūhoe, Whakatane
17 December	DOC Wellington Xmas party

January

27 Jan – 14 Feb	Lou -Annual Leave, Rachel Bruce acting
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February

13 February	Chief Executive's Environmental and Economic Forum, Wellington
18 February	DG Stakeholder BBQ, DOC Wellington
19 February	DOC/FENZ Leadership Teams meeting Fire and Emergency, The Terrace Wellington
20 February	State Sector Senior Leaders Retreat, Ohariu Wellington
21 February	NZ Conservation Authority, DOC Wellington

4 Addendum

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Subject headings of content in this section are:

- Judicial Review application - Rangitira Developments Limited v Ministers of Conservation and Energy & Resources (CIV-2019-485-020)
- Phil Taueki restricting public access to Lake Horowhenua Domain

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1 Standing and Priority Items

1.1 Kauri dieback and myrtle rust

- On 12 December, DOC staff attended a working group to provide input on a Mataranga Māori Framework for surveillance of myrtle rust. This is part of the prioritised research identified and funded by the National Science Challenge's Ngā Rakāu Taketake programme identified for this summer.
- Kauri dieback mitigation of the tracks on Great Barrier Island has now finished. DOC's Kauri Dieback Recreation Project is progressing mitigation work on selected tracks in the Auckland and Whangarei areas.

Contact: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

1.2 RMA advocacy

Submissions

New Zealand King Salmon Open Water Salmon Farm, Cook Strait:

- Our report on this submission last week was not clear about the action taken. We confirm that we lodged a submission in opposition on 5 December. The remainder of the item was correct.
- We apologise for the conflicting messages.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2 Updates

2.1 National cat management strategy

- The National Cat Management Strategy Group (NCMSG) will be providing you and Ministers O'Connor and Mahuta with revised strategy documents before Christmas. These have been updated from previous versions published in September 2017 due to the interest expressed by yourself and Minister O'Connor during meetings held with NZVA & SPCA.
- We have been advised there are no major changes to the recommendations and associated strategic goals and outcomes of the NCMSG. The updates are essentially cosmetic aside from the inclusion of the scientific literature & legislation published over the past two years. Updates are in line with the original agreed NCMSG recommendations that all members and advisors (MPI & DOC) approved.
- The updated version includes a revision of recommendations so that they are more actionable and additional information on the impacts of toxoplasmosis on pastoral industries.
- Our experts will be reviewing the revised strategy and providing more considered advice ahead of any meeting between yourself, Minister O'Connor and Minister Mahuta in the New Year.
- We understand that MPI have already briefed Minister O'Connor's office of the imminent arrival of the revised strategy and have also recommended that a tri-Minister meeting would be the preferred outcome. The chair of the NCMSG anticipates that this will likely occur in February/March to allow officials to prepare advice to their respective Ministers.

Contact:

2.2 Integrated public information and summer behaviour campaign launched

- DOC's summer visitor behaviour campaign, 'Love this place' has now launched across multiple digital channels. This initiative is an evolution of last year's successful 'Visit the Kiwi way' and addresses behavioural issues specific to conservation land and waters. This year's campaign has a much smaller budget (approx. \$150,000) and reused much of the content developed for last year's award-winning education programme.
- Love this place sits within the Tiaki-Care for New Zealand family, which DOC leads alongside New Zealand Māori Tourism, TIA, Tourism New Zealand, and other tourism partners. Other campaigns that align with Tiaki-Care for New Zealand include safe driving, responsible camping, and fire prevention education. We are working closely with the lead agencies to ensure these campaigns are complimentary and not competing.
- There is a comprehensive media plan accompanying the campaign including news stories targeted at mainstream media as part of our summer content strategy. TVNZ has already filmed a story about marine mammal interaction in the Bay of Islands which we expect to air on 15 December. Radio New Zealand is recording a story about the impacts of drone use on sea bird colonies.
- The 'Love this place' activity has a cost-effective digital focus, with messages delivered to targeted visitor groups and very deliberate geographic locations. Advertising will appear as videos and images on news website, social media, Youtube, as well as tourism apps such as Campermate and Rankers. We have seen a good return on investment so far and a lessening of the public commentary in relation to tourism pressures.

- There is printed collateral available in Te Reo Māori, English, German, and Chinese. Posters are available for DOC's partners and staff, and postcards will be distributed at more than 600 key tourist locations including accommodation providers, attractions, ferries, etc. We will be sending a package of collateral to your office in the coming days.
- We have been working with Arataki Cultural Trails to create short videos of Māori tourism operators who are operating on their own whenua. The intent of this is to add cultural depth to the concept of kaitiakitanga for visitors in an authentic and relevant way.
- A pre-campaign survey has been completed to provide baseline data on behaviours among targeted groups. There will be a post-campaign survey, as well as actual behaviour monitoring on the Abel Tasman Coast Track investigating toileting issues.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.3 New Zealand Motor Caravan Association (NZMCA)

- The Commercial Partnerships Team has developed an agreement between New Zealand Motor Caravan Association (NZMCA), KiwiRail, Kea Conservation Trust and DOC for the support of Kea Recovery.
- The signing of the agreement has been postponed from 18 December until the New Year. This is to enable final details of the arrangement between KiwiRail and NZMCA to be documented.
- Potential dates are being scoped and it may be possible for you to attend if your schedule allows.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.4 TVNZ story on wallaby control

- A film crew from TVNZ's Sunday programme has requested permission to film at Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve as part of a story about the effect of wallabies on New Zealand's ecosystems.
- We understand TVNZ's interest in wallabies is a result of Forest & Bird's recent call for more government funding for wallaby control, including more control in the Rotorua lakes area.
- Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve is controlled and managed by the Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve Board, who have supported the granting of a concession by DOC for this filming. While Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC) will host the film crew, we have not been asked to be involved in filming at this stage.
- We understand TVNZ plan to film several plots at Lake Okataina Scenic Reserve, which are designed to demonstrate the effect pests such as wallabies have on vegetation in this area.
- These plots form part of wider work to reduce wallaby numbers in the Rotorua area. Work is currently underway to develop a wallaby control plan and a wallaby project co-ordinator has recently been engaged to drive engagement with iwi and other stakeholders, jointly funded by us and BOPRC.
- BOPRC has advised that the film crew may head to Canterbury early in the New Year to film additional content for this story.

Contact: [REDACTED]

2.5 Responsible Camping

- MBIE is the lead agency implementing the responsible camping cross-government work programme, with guidance provided by the Responsible Camping Working Group and the Minister of Tourism.
- The Minister of Tourism established the Responsible Camping Working Group in 2018 to identify ways to better manage the camping system. It is a partnership between central government, local government and industry.
- We are an active part of the responsible camping cross-government programme, attending cross-agency meetings and supporting the MBIE work programme. We also have a representative (Bruce Parkes) on the Responsible Camping Working Group.
- [REDACTED]
- MBIE is instead exploring how to work effectively and efficiently within the current regulatory system, whilst gathering data and information to inform future decision making.
- The MBIE work programme includes:
 - providing funding for local councils to support camping infrastructure, education and enforcement;
 - marketing and summer campaigns, connected to the Tiaki promise and DOC's 'Love this place' visitor behavioural campaign;
 - exploring a potential review of the 1985 Camping Ground Regulations to unlock the supply of low-cost camping offerings;
 - trialing new technologies to improve the management of camping, such as a new 'Ambassador App' to connect local ambassadors in different regions;
 - a 'zoning trial' in Kaikōura to test new ways of providing accurate information to visitors about where they can and cannot camp;
 - a national research project to analyse the trends and behaviours of freedom campers; and
 - scoping improvements to the system for self-contained vehicles.

Contact: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

3 Director-General Engagements

December

17 December DOC Wellington Xmas Party, Wellington

January

27 Jan– 14 Feb Lou – annual leave, Rachel Bruce acting

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13 February Chief Executive's Environmental and Economic Forum, Wellington

18 February DG Stakeholder BBQ, Wellington

19 February DOC/FENZ Leadership Team meeting, Fire and Emergency, Wellington

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- DOC to delay decision on opening of Cape Kidnappers reserve and access to gannet colony
- One Billion Trees programme
- World Heritage convention
- Convention on Migratory Species key developments