



caring about you & your environment

Report 99.154

File: F/2/4/8, B/10/1/1

22 March 1999

geoff\reports\Draft LC99 doc

Report to the Policy and Finance Committee
from Geoff Cameron, Manager, Natural Forestry and
Murray Kennedy, Manager, Strategy and Assets

**Possum Control Operation : Wainuiomata and Orongorongo Water
Collection Areas**

1. **Purpose**

To inform Council that the communication and operational planning processes which began in February are now complete.

To obtain final endorsement from Council to proceed with the possum control operation in the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo Water Collection areas.

2. **Communication Programme was Carried Out**

Report 99.12 to both the Landcare and Utility Services Committees outlined a communication process for Landcare and Water Group staff to complete. This has now been done. Specifically:

- (1) Water Group Managers, contacted their four water supply customers. They told them the basis for, and value of, this operation. No adverse comments were received.
- (2) All the immediate neighbours of the two catchments were advised by letter, followed by a phone call. Only one neighbour wished to include a small area (20 hectares) of his land in the operation.

Owners of small properties in Moores Valley held a meeting and expressed some concerns about the safety of their water supply. They were concerned that possums would eat the poison on WRC land, then move over the hill to their properties and contaminate the water. This is not likely to happen, and in any event their water is not likely to be contaminated by 1080 in this way because on contact with water and soil it breaks down rapidly into its constituent compounds which are completely safe.

The Manager, Natural Forestry, received three letters from neighbours and responded to them. He also spoke personally to the person who organised the meeting. The concerns relate mainly to the ridge line above Moores Valley, and will in effect be adjudicated by the Medical Officer of Health conditions.

- (3) The Council's Iwi liaison officer made Report 99.12 available to Iwi. There has been no formal response. Iwi have also been formally contacted as part of the resource consent process, and the issue is being dealt with through the Iwi processes.
- (4) The Manager, Natural Forestry wrote to the Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand enclosing a copy of Report 99.12. He subsequently spoke to the Society's Conservation Director. There is strong support for the operation.
- (5) Water Group staff have been informed, and some specific actions have been agreed to for the Wainui treatment plant operators, e.g., provision of an alternative water supply while the water treatment plant is closed. Landcare staff were also informed.
- (6) An extensive water testing programme has been prepared and discussed with the Medical Officer of Health. As a result the programme will be supplemented with field observation of the baits in secure open enclosures. The baits will need to decay before the water treatment plant is reopened.

3. Operational Plans are Underway

Biosecurity department staff have completed the detailed operational plans, including loading the area into the helicopter company's GPS navigation system and calibrating the buckets to be used.

Both the pre operation trap-catch analysis for possums, and the assessment of deer numbers began in mid March.

Biosecurity staff have also lodged applications with the Medical Officer of Health, and the Consents department of the WRC. No problems are anticipated.

The cost of the operation, minus the Animal Health Board contribution to the extensive monitoring work, is estimated to be \$144,000. This includes the costs of the communication programme and the water testing programme.

4. The Next Step

When the two consents have been obtained, and Council has endorsed the operation, two weeks public notification will be given. Landcare staff will erect warning signs. DoC staff will assist by advising trampers and other recreational groups who use DoC land close to mutual boundaries.

When the two week notification period has elapsed, weather and helicopter availability will drive the actual application day.

5. Recommendations

- (1) *That the Report be received and its contents noted.*
- (2) *That, subject to the WRC and the Medical Officer of Health granting consent for the operation to proceed, the Council endorse the possum control operation in the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo catchments proceeding.*

Report prepared by:

Approval for submission:



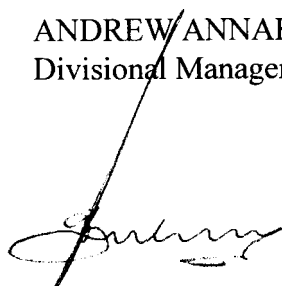
GEOFF CAMERON
Manager, Natural Forestry



ANDREW ANNAKIN
Divisional Manager, Landcare



MURRAY KENNEDY
Manager, Strategy and Assets



DAVID BENHAM
Divisional Manager, Utility Services