

DOC consultation with iwi on the use of 1080 poison in animal pest control

The Department of Conservation's consultation with iwi and Maori land owners around the country on 1080 issues has been consistent, comprehensive, committed and successful, as the following examples from Conservancies show.

Northland Conservancy

In the last five years there have been three 1080 operations: Waima, aerial drop, 2003; Waipoua, aerial drop, 2005; and Mimiwhangata/Kaikanui/Whangaruru - ground laid, 2006.

The Waima and Waipoua operations entailed extensive consultation with iwi, as tangata whenua (via rununga, trust boards and hui) and as residents adjoining the operational areas. In both cases there was acceptance, generally, and in many cases, support for these aerial operations.

The third operation involved consultation with hapu and iwi, including: personal contact; phone calls; letters; and distribution of DOC publications on 1080, on other control options, and the reasoning for the preferred option of 1080. Meetings with iwi were held at their offices to discuss the proposed operations and support from the iwi resource management teams was obtained.

DOC met personally with each hapu on their respective marae (in some cases more than once), and the support of marae committees was obtained. One hapu offered several of their young whanau to help out if needed, and four individuals were subsequently employed (under supervision) for the ground laying of 1080 poison baits.

Auckland Conservancy

Not applicable.

Bay Of Plenty

All three Area Offices and the Conservancy Office have always consulted with the iwi associated with the area where pest control operations are planned.

DOC consultation is generally carried out with iwi liaison officers who then take issues, if any, back to the runanga for discussion and response to DOC. Iwi are then advised of the proposed operation and location and are asked for information on any sensitive cultural or traditional sites and/or waahi tapu requiring special consideration or exclusion.

In some cases DOC meets on the marae for a hui, and on other occasions, DOC discusses the proposal by phone. At times we have shown the operation documentation to iwi and have talked in detail the proposed operation and methods of control.

As the operations get underway, DOC offers to iwi the opportunity of being present at water quality testing. In some cases, iwi members turn up on the day of the pest control operation and monitor the operation. For the recent Opuia operation, DOC encouraged the iwi, Raukawa, to visit the site.

Iwi are not generally involved in the operation itself, but there may be iwi members employed by the contractor, as occurred last year at Te Kopia.

Waikato Conservancy

Consultation with tangata whenua on 1080 operations is carried out at two levels:

- The tangata whenua, including iwi, hapu, whanau, whose traditional lands overlap the geographical area of the operation;
- Private landowners, whose collective or individual titles overlap the geographical area of the operation.

The method of consultation and the contact points within tangata whenua consulted vary between operations and between Area Offices:

- Area staff consult with regional management committees representing a cluster of iwi, where these exist, over a wide range of conservation activities, with pest control being just one topic covered;
- In Hauraki Area, DOC consults with the Hauraki Maori Trust Board and in Maniapoto, the Maniapoto Maori Trust Board;
- Where direction is given by the RMCs or trust boards, or on the basis of past experience or where RMCs are lacking, DOC's consultation may be carried out with individual iwi and/or hapu;
- With iwi and hapu, consultation may traverse a range of conservation activities, or may be for the immediate operation, depending on the relationship DOC has with these groups, and/or the types of activities being carried out by DOC within their traditional lands;
- Consultation with landowners (including individual landowners and shareholders or spokespersons for shareholders in multiple-title land) operates as described above.

East Coast/Hawke's Bay Conservancy

For most ongoing operations – that is, the maintenance of goats, possums and rats at target densities, DOC does not carry out intensive or broadscale consultation campaigns. The reason is that dialogue with tangata whenua is ongoing, and much work is tendered to members of tangata whenua who are keen to take up the work opportunity.

That said, provision is made for “learner” blocks, and for easy blocks for newcomers to enter the pest control industry, and DOC has worked with hapu to appraise them of these opportunities.

As a general rule, consultation with Maori over a land matter would be with the hapu claiming ownership of the specific parcel of land (the iwi or runanga office tending to have an administrative, rather than an ownership interest). There are at least 30 iwi in East Coast/Hawke's Bay Conservancy; hapu would number in the hundreds.

The 1080 issue now involves very specific and extensive consultation with Maori. Some large proposals may involve more than one hapu. DOC may join them together for a discussion on the proposal, or deal with the different groups separately.

As a rule, a preliminary meeting would be held to describe the proposal area and the proposal generally. DOC may facilitate a pre-operation inspection, which may include an aerial inspection by kaumatua and kuia. The land owners would then discuss the matter among themselves, which may take some weeks to complete. At that point, DOC would return to further discussions with Maori to hear any issues raised and respond to them. Following this, agreement is generally reached, and if not, further discussions are carried out to tie up loose ends. DOC has, and will continue to facilitate post-operation inspections and follow-up meetings as part of the consultation process.

The Conservancy is home to many people who have returned to the land from elsewhere and the matter of 1080 use is of importance to them; we treat their interests seriously.

The Animal Health Board has in the past, and continues to seek DOC staff support for their meetings and contacts with hapu.

Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy

- Tongariro Forest 1080 operation. August 2006: This was a large (20,000 ha) joint AHB/DOC aerial 1080 operation. Iwi consultation started in February 2006 with the inaugural meeting of the Tongariro Forest Management Group. Ngati Hikairo was invited into this advisory group to represent the interests of the tangata whenua in the area. No major concerns were raised by the iwi representatives at this meeting, or in subsequent debriefings. An offer of a verbal briefing was provided to Ngati Tuwharetoa by DOC, and the opportunity sought to comment on the operation at a Tuwharetoa Trust Board Conservation Committee meeting. The trust declined these offers because it was satisfied that the consultation with Ngati Hikairo had been appropriately carried out.
- Karioi Rahui (southern Ruapehu) ongoing possum maintenance control: Since 1996 DOC has a partnership by way of Memorandum of Agreement with Ngati Rangi to collectively manage 5300 ha of public conservation land on the southern slopes of Ruapehu known as Karioi Rahui. The Management Committee is a 50/50 mix of DOC and Ngati Rangi representatives. Iwi consultation on possum control activities, including the repeated use of toxins including 1080 in ground-based operations occurs at these regular meetings.
- AHB vector control operations: Most aerial 1080 operations on public conservation land in the Conservancy are AHB funded and conducted by Epro Ltd. DOC has been witness to the effective communication/consultation that Epro Ltd carries out with tangata whenua and Maori landowners (e.g. Lake Rotoaira Forest Trust).

Wanganui Conservancy

Iwi/hapu consultation is managed at the Area Office level, and is usually operation specific. The level of consultation depends on the size or complexity of the operation and the relationship with iwi/hapu.

The Conservancy maintains a regular programme of 1080 operations, and, as such, is regularly consulting with iwi/hapu. Much of the consultation groundwork established in the early years is now paying off - Areas no longer have to start from scratch in approaching iwi/hapu.

For their part, DOC Area staff maintain regular contact with iwi/hapu groups, with meetings covering a wide range of conservation activities, which will include upcoming 1080 operations. Some groups are satisfied by this level of engagement; for others, additional operation-specific meetings have been held; and in some cases, a phone call and/or letter is the only additional consultation that is required.

Where iwi/hapu are landowners, consultation follows the DOC animal pest standard operating procedures, as would be the case for any adjoining/affected landowners.

Where third parties, e.g. the Animal Health Board, are carrying out pest control on public conservation land, the Conservancy requires that party to carry out the same standard of consultation with iwi/hapu as it would carry out itself.

The Conservancy periodically reports on all wild animal management activity including 1080 operations. Such reports are made freely available to all stakeholders, including iwi/hapu.

Examples of DOC consultation:

- Egmont National Park – consultation included letters to iwi, information packs and marae visits by DOC staff to discuss the issues. Some sites of special cultural significance are treated by hand, rather than by aerial methods, and opportunities to do that work have been offered to iwi/hapu groups, as appropriate.
- Whanganui National Park – consultation usually entails a letter to iwi, as well as discussions at regular iwi/Area Office meetings. In the initial years of 1080 treatment, site visits to previously-treated areas and DOC/iwi joint inspections of areas of concern were conducted to ensure iwi were informed to their satisfaction. As with Egmont National Park, some sites of special cultural significance are treated by hand rather than aerial methods, and work and training opportunities arising from that work have been offered to iwi/hapu.

Wellington Conservancy

The Conservancy's consultation with iwi on 1080 operations (and other conservation issues) tends to be straightforward and occurs without fuss. The standard procedure is to send out letters describing proposed operations to iwi, inviting their comment and seeking their approval, which is then obtained. Information provided includes a fact sheet on the proposed operation. The offer is made of a briefing face-to-face, which is rarely taken up.

Nelson/Marlborough Conservancy

The approach to consultation in a particular instance will depend on the nature of the relationship between an Area Office and tangata whenua:

- For example, some Areas will discuss the annual work programme with local iwi at business planning time in a general sense, and then consult in more detail on individual operations;
- Other Areas have a close relationship with their local iwi and will have regular contact to discuss DOC and iwi activities throughout the year. Upcoming pest operations will often be a feature of this and a high profile operation will likely be discussed a number of times before it goes ahead, reducing the need for more intensive consultation closer to the day.
- Still other Areas will carry out specific, intensive consultation immediately prior to an operation with iwi being one of the most important stakeholders. The approach and time involved at the wider level will also depend on the number of iwi involved, i.e. whether an Area is dealing with one iwi or five.

As part of individual operations, where iwi have expressed an interest or concerns, iwi monitors of operations have been proposed (by DOC and/or iwi) and iwi have been involved periodically in some Areas.

West Coast/Tai Poutini Conservancy

The Conservancy has two scheduled monthly runanga meetings. Area staff provide details of 1080 (and other) possum operations occurring within that year and updates as the operation date approaches. Any concerns raised are addressed either at the scheduled meetings or by special meeting if necessary, which Conservancy and expert staff may attend.

Prior consultation with local runanga and Ngai Tahu Rohe is carried out when applying for RMA consent for possum control operations.

DOC consults with one land trust on the West Coast (South Island Landless Native Act lands) which has granted permission for aerial 1080 possum control.

Invitations are extended to local runanga to observe the operation and post-operation field monitoring but these are seldom taken up.

Canterbury Conservancy

1080 issues apply mainly at Waimakariri and Twizel/Te Manahuna Areas, for Operation Ark conservation work. Where the use of 1080 has been proposed, full consultation has been carried out with runaka and the tribal authority, Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu. Support has been granted on every occasion.

Otago Conservancy

Caples/Dart 1080 operation for Operation Ark, September 2006: DOC's initial discussions were with Te Roopu O Araiteuru [Otago] and Kaitiaki Roopu O Murihiku [Southland] at their regular meetings. These organisations were briefed on the overall Operation Ark project, e.g. the build up to the 2005-2007 beech mast and consequent pest population explosions, and proposed options, which were brodifacoum initially, with aerial 1080 as the fallback option.

In the event, DOC had to shift to 1080 very quickly when the brodifacoum was not taken by the rats. At that stage both roopu signalled they wanted to be kept fully informed, stage by stage, as we built our work programme towards the drop dates. DOC responded to this request with email contacts to each papatipu runanga, which worked well and with no concerns raised. This outcome was expected because both roopu have supported the project from the beginning.

Maori land trusts have not been involved but the neighbours in this case were Ngai Tahu high country properties, namely, Routeburn, Greenstone and Elfin Bay. Ngai Tahu was therefore consulted at the landowner and station manager level, as well.

During the 1080 operation, contact with iwi and station managers was maintained by email.

Where DOC itself is undertaking a 1080 operation on DOC-managed land, DOC has developed a workable approach over a number of years to guide its relationship with some private Maori landowning trusts in Otago.

However, in recent years DOC has not carried out any aerial 1080 control work directly on DOC-managed land; rather, that work has been carried out by the AHB as part of their Tb eradication programme. In these instances it is usual for DOC to engage in the early rounds of discussions with relevant landowners and runanga, along with AHB and their contractors, but leave the final processes to the applicants as they have the detailed knowledge of the proposed work. DOC ensures that this consultation has occurred.

Southland Conservancy

The approach for iwi consultation on toxins for pest control used in Southland has been straightforward, and the example of Rakiura/Stewart Island illustrates. There, a pest liaison group has been established, and iwi are represented on that group along with other stakeholders.

Consultation follows two main tracks:

- Liaison group includes representation from iwi (Ngai Tahu via members of the local runanga) and Rakiura Maori Land Trust (largest other land owner on the island and who also regard themselves as tangata whenua, distinct from the local papatipu runanga of Ngai Tahu). DOC advises regularly on ongoing work, results and plans.
- Kaitiaki Roopu (the Southland iwi, a representative from each of the 4 papatipu runanga and the iwi members from the Southland Conservation Board) is consulted with extensively, pre and post operation. There is considerable overlap in membership between both groups.

In summary, Southland Conservancy talks to all Maori stakeholders all of the time.