

Reassessment of 1080

Hearing of submissions – Dunedin 14-15 May 2007

Submission of Southland Conservation Board

By Roger McNaughton – Southland Conservation Board Chairperson

Verbal Submission

Conservation boards have broad advocacy powers under conservation act 1987 which enables it to advocate its interests in any public forum or statutory planning process. Boards are not a decision making body to the Department of Conservation but instead offers advice and makes recommendations on a wide range of conservation issues. The Southland Conservation Board, on considering the reassessment of 1080, can only consider its use in the context of the Southland Conservancy. Some 52% of the land area of Southland is managed by the Department of Conservation, This area includes the huge land masses of Fiordland National Park, Stewart Island / Rakiura National Park and the Sub-Antarctic Islands. Within these conservation lands there are some major “pest” issues that have had to be addressed and will require future consideration if our native bird and plant species are to have a chance of survival. The Southland Conservancy of the Department of Conservation has had many successful projects in eradicating pest animals from off shore islands so endangered species can be returned.

Mainland operation have also slowed the damage of the pests. Without a doubt the use of 1080 in these projects has resulted in an acceptable cost, time, and pest control result. The Department of conservation is often accused of topdressing our forests with 1080. Again I can only use information from the Southland Conservancy to show how incorrect this statement is.

For the last five years the Department of Conservation has used 1080 poison over the following areas in Southland:

1080 applied by aerial application 4,000 ha

1080 applied by ground operations 37,000ha

A huge success story has been the use of 1080 on ground operations on Stewart Island / Rakiura where to date 30,000 ha have been covered for possum control. This project has the support of the community and interested groups through the “Pest Liaison Group” developed by the Dept of Conservation.

Aerial application of 1080 (which appears to be a greater concern to the public) was not supported by this group but the use of ground operation using 1080 was. The Southland Conservation Board considers the results from 2002 – 2006 of 27,625ha have been outstanding with a RTC of 0.7% (Residual trap catch after operation). It may well be that possum numbers over the whole of Stewart Island could be controlled in the future with the resulting improvement of bird and plant species recovery. I use this example of a very successful, pest control operation where the ‘community’ has complete buy in to the programme. This has arisen because of the Department of Conservations liaison with the community and its acceptance of the use of 1080 in bags against aerial 1080 which wasn’t an acceptable method to the community. Fiordland with its more rugged terrain requires more use of aerial application of 1080 for possum control.

Conclusion

While the Southland Conservation supports its responsible use of 1080 we do so with some concerns. At this time we consider there is no other effective options but to continue its use.

The Board acknowledges there can be non-target kills which can be limited with ground based operations but not all land is suitable for this method. The Wild Animal Recovery (WARS) industry is now starting a slow road to recovery after a vital collapse a few years ago. This industry and recreational hunters are the major controllers of feral deer and no cost to the tax payer. It is extremely important that both groups continue to harvest feral deer without any risk of poisoned meat putting the industry at risk. So in supporting the continued use of 1080 poison for pest control we ask that any risk factors associated with its use be limited as much as practicable.