

Support for increased pest trapping in the Coromandel

TO	Thames-Coromandel District Council
FROM	Scott Summerfield - Policy and Planning Manager
DATE	10 January 2018
SUBJECT	Support for increased pest trapping in the Coromandel

1 Purpose of report

This report recommends Council approves a position of advocating to the Minister of Conservation that, where possible, animal pest control be undertaken by trapping, hunting and ground-based use of non-residual poisons.

2 Background

At the Council meeting on 12 December 2017 several petitions relating to the use of 1080 were tabled for Council consideration by Wendy Pond and Stephanie McKee. These petitions are another step in a long line of calls from some parts of the community for a cessation of the use of aerial 1080 drops as a form of pest control by the Department of Conservation and the Waikato Regional Council. There are equally other parts of the Coromandel community which support aerial poisoning as an important conservation tool for pest control, including prominent conservationists and conservation organisations.

Council has no legislative function relating to decisions around pest control and is often incorrectly viewed by the community as sanctioning 1080 pest control.

The documents tabled by Wendy Pond on 12 December 2017 also referenced a Council resolution from 16 December 2009 as follows:

"Agrees to advocate to the Minister of Conservation that where possible animal pest control in the Thames-Coromandel District be undertaken by trapping, hunting and non-residual poisons."

3 Issue

A response to petitions and documents tabled by Wendy Pond and Stephanie McKee in Council's public forum on 12 December 2017 has been requested by the Mayor. Staff recommend Council reiterate to the Minister of Conservation a preference, where possible, for trapping, hunting and use of non-residual poisons in pest control efforts.

4 Discussion

Council is not well positioned to enter the public and policy debate on the use of 1080 as an aerial poison. The responsibility relating to pest control methods in the Thames-Coromandel District does not sit with Council. No expertise on the science behind 1080 as a poison or the logistics of its use in aerial drops is held in-house or has been sought in preparing this report. Taking an uninformed position in what is a fraught debate within the Coromandel is not advised.

Advocating for increased pest control in the Coromandel generally by the Department of Conservation, and a preference for trapping, hunting and use on non-residual poisons where possible, would be more appropriate and would reiterate a 2009 Council position.

Council should also take this opportunity to emphasise its support for increased pest control by DOC generally in the Coromandel, noting the intention of the Labour-NZ First-Green Party government to significantly increase operational funding for DOC.

One of the petitions raised concerns with storage of 1080 pellets in Whitianga prior to an aerial drop in October 2017 and requested Council take action with the perceived inappropriate storage, however staff advise that Council does not have a function relating to the storage of poisons and do not recommend any further action.

The remaining petition raised concerns around the drop of 1080 within Council water supply catchments and requested that Council test the tributaries of its water supplies following each 1080 drop and provide the results to the public. Council regularly monitors water supplies through Veolia following 1080 drops, in conversation with DOC and WRC. No 1080 has been identified to date in Council water supplies following these drops. Monitoring of relevant water supplies by Veolia will continue following each 1080 drop and the public will be appropriately notified if there is a risk to public health and safety.

5 Suggested resolution(s)

That the Thames-Coromandel District Council:

1. Receives the 'Support for increased pest trapping in the Coromandel' report.
2. Notes the petitions and documents provided by Wendy Pond and Stephanie McKee on 12 December 2017.
3. Agrees to advocate to the Minister of Conservation for increased pest control efforts on conservation land in the Coromandel and that where possible animal pest control in the Thames-Coromandel District be undertaken by trapping, hunting and non-residual poisons.