
REPORT 1
(1215/13/IM)

GOAT ERADICATION PROJECT

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's endorsement of the communications plan for the Makara Goat Eradication Project, particularly around the key messages associated with this project. The report also seeks the Board's approval of the service description for the Project Coordinator.

2. Executive Summary

The Department of Conservation have approved funds for the eradication of goats from the Makara Peninsula. As part of this project a communications plan has been developed covering key messages for the duration of the programme. A service description has been created for the coordinator position.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Makara/Ohariu Community Board:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Agree to the communications plan;*
- 3. Agree to the service description for the Project Coordinator contract.*

4. Background

A communications plan is required to ensure that a consistent message is presented by all parties and to help identify communications resources for the project.

The service description will enable a call for expressions of interest for a contract for the three year coordinator position. The coordinator is to be funded

by the Department of Conservation Biodiversity Advice Fund at \$20,000 pa and will report to Justin McCarthy (Pest Management Officer, Parks and Gardens). The coordinator will also provide regular updates to the Community Board and be the first point of contact for the project.

5. Discussion

5.1 Communications Plan

The communications plan (see *Appendix 1*) has been reviewed and approved by the Council's External Communications team. Key messages include:

- The control of wild goats is needed to protect, restore and enhance the environment
- The control programme will be well-organised, safe and humane
- The work is funded primarily through the Department of Conservation Biodiversity Fund

Key risks identified, together with their mitigation, are:

- Negative media attention – explain the issues with feral goats and the benefits of removing them from the ecosystem
- Negative landowner reaction – get neighbours on board so they can see the benefits, raise awareness of programmes such as QEII Covenants and planting programmes. Legislation does exist to enforce feral goat control on private land.
- Negative feedback from recreational hunters – recreational hunting is not effectively managing the increasing goat numbers.

5.2 Service description for Project Coordinator

The key responsibilities for the Project Coordinator are described below.

Goat control, monitoring and surveillance

- Obtain agreement and consent from landowners within the management area
- Participate in planning the control programme
- Coordinate block-based hunting using a professional contractor
- Be the main contact for sightings and absence reports
- Coordinate and carry out additional surveillance of hunted areas as required
- Auditing and reporting of performance measures
- Manage and monitor landowner's own hunting activities
- Report back on status and condition of any goat farming activities within the management area e.g. escapees.

Relationships

Build and maintain professional working relationships with all landowners in the management area where goats are present.

Technical requirements

Strong demonstrable knowledge of and experience in:

- Aerial and ground-based goat control methods using firearms across varying types of terrain
- Working with the public and building relationships with diverse sections of the community
- Data collection, record keeping and reporting

Sound demonstrable knowledge of and experience in:

- Managing external contractors
- Goat control methods at low densities and/or heavily vegetated country, e.g. Judas goats and finder-bailer dogs.

6. Conclusion

Agreement with the communications plan and approval of the service description are important milestones in implementing the programme. Depending on our success with appointing a coordinator and professional hunters, the intention is to begin the hunting programme in Spring 2011.

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Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

This project is consistent with the Biodiversity Action Plan (2007), Action 2.1.4 'Eradicate feral goats from the south-west pensinsula'.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

This project is funded externally and through the reprioritisation of existing funds.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

This project has no Treaty of Waitangi implications.

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

All major landholders within the management area are aware and supportive of this project.

b) Consultation with Maori

Mana whenua have not been consulted specifically about the commencement of this project, however were part of the development of the Biodiversity Action Plan which includes this project.

6) Legal Implications

This project has no legal implications.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report sets out the first steps of implementing Action 2.1.4