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Submissions to Hearing for the Proposed Southland Regional Pest Management Plan

Introduction

I am Sue Maturin and I am Forest and Bird's Conservation Regional Manager for Otago and Southland. I have an MSc in Natural Resource Management and more than 30 years experience in Conservation and Natural Resource Management.

Our Southland Branch wrote a submission for Forest and Bird as I was on bereavement leave and family illness leave, however I had previously written substantive comments during the pre consultation phase.

Support

Forest and Bird supports both the Omaui and Stewart Island Site led programmes. We strongly endorse the progressive containment and reduction in the distribution of feral cats at these sites including the desexing, microchipping and registering of domestic cats.

Forest and Bird also seeks greater support from Environment Southland for community groups to undertake pest control.

Forest and Bird would like to see more site led sites established especially in the Catlins and wish to encourage the Council to be more proactive in seeking community support for more site led programs where they are most needed rather than waiting for the community to come to the Council.

We support the submissions from Predator Free Rakiura Leadership Group to reference and include the interim goals of Predator Free 2050. We also support Predator Free NZ Trust's submissions, especially in relation to possums and pest cats, being those without microchips.

Forest and Bird supports the list of animal pests in Table 2 however we are disappointed that feral deer, pigs and goats are not listed as regional pests so that there could be rules prohibiting the release from containment of any goat, pig, or deer into any part of Southland and that there are rules regarding fencing for goats. We recommended their inclusion in our pre consultation package.

Wilding conifers

F&B applauds the plan objective that sets a specific target for the area that will be cleared of wilding trees within the Southland Wilding Conifer High Risk Area, and naturally we would like to see this target set higher and more funds directed to achieve it. We further support the Department of Conservation's submission to extend the WC Risk area to include regionally significant wetlands and the Mid Dome Wilding Trees Charitable Trust submission to extend the proposed Southland Wilding Conifer High Risk Area.

Forest and Bird also recognises the ongoing issue with respect to wildings arising from existing shelter belts and plantations and urge the development of rules to deal with these as they will continue to undermine wilding tree control. Forest and Bird does not concur with the concept of existing use rights as they are only an RMA concept and under the NES Plantation Forestry Rules they are also related to the RMA regional and district rules. Specific Rules can be created under the Biosecurity Act. The assumption that rules cannot be created right now needs testing.

F&B supports MPI submission to add the following as Pest Plants to Table 2.

- Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*),
- Dwarf mountain pine (*Pinus mugo*),
- European larch (*Larix decidua*) (excluding sterile hybrids).

I acknowledge that they are less of a concern in Southland never the less they are spread prone species and listing them will prevent new plantations.

Sycamore

Forest and Bird seeks that Sycamore be added as a pest plant species – progressive containment. We note that Otago has proposed it be classified as a pest – under a site led programme. It invades forests, shrub lands, tussock grasslands, fern lands and river beds and is a problem in a number of areas in Southland including around the edge of the New River Estuary and in the Catlins

Grey willow, Rowan and Silver Birch

Grey willow are recognised in the proposed plan as a problem for wetlands, however there are no region wide objectives or rules to address this issue. At the very least they should be removed and excluded from regionally significant wetlands. Similarly for Rowan and Silver Birch. Like Grey willow silver birch can form dense canopies in wetlands.

Russell lupin

F&B supports the Department of Conservation submission seeking the addition of Russell lupins as an exclusion species for all of Southland. The impacts of Russell lupins are such that we consider they should be listed as a pest species so that Sections 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act apply. We are disappointed that this weed has only been included as an Organism of interest. Forest and Bird sought the addition of Russell lupins in our submissions to earlier pest management strategies and asked for this in our pre consultation comments. A precautionary approach needs to be taken to prevent wild Russell lupins from becoming further established in Southland. We recommend that at the very least Environment Southland consider adopting the same or better approach to Wild Russell lupins as in Otago. There is also a need for an education program about the potential threat of Russell lupins to riverbed wildlife.

Russell lupins are growing in the wild in Southland, along roadsides and in some riverbeds. It is established locally in the Eglinton Valley. Russell lupins are a serious threat to riverbed birds in the Mackenzie and have the potential to spread along riverbeds and roadsides in Southland. .

Your neighbours in Otago have included Russell lupins as a sustained control plant and have an objective to sustainably control the extent of wild Russell lupin within specified distances from waterways to preclude establishment of wild Russell lupin and to prevent adverse effects on environmental Values.

This is to be implemented through two pest agent rules. One specifies that no wild Russell lupin shall be planted within specified distances of various braided, non-braided and artificial water courses and within 10m of any adjoining property boundary. The second requires all occupiers on rural land to eliminate wild Russell lupin within the above specified areas.

Thank you