

Report to Community Restoration Committee – Public Excluded

Date: 10 July 2020

Author: 1 - S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987

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Subject: Natural Heritage Fund Applications

Section: A (Committee has delegated authority to make decision)

Purpose

1. To present five applications for a Natural Heritage Fund grant for consideration and decision by the Committee from the following organisations:
 - A Rocha Aotearoa
 - Moehau Environment Group
 - Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group
 - Te Ara Hou Kennedy Bay Ltd
 - Mokaihaha Kokako Trust.

Executive Summary

2. Council's Natural Heritage Fund (NHF) is derived from the Natural Heritage Targeted Rate which is currently set at \$5.80 per property in the region. The balance for the year ending 30 June 2020 is \$1,029,000. Five community organisations focused on large predator control projects are seeking multi-year grants from the NHF:
 - A Rocha Aotearoa – Karioi Project
 - Moehau Environment Group – Field Operations for Landscape Predator Control
 - Whenuakiwi Trust – Whenuakite Kiwi Care Project
 - Te Ara Hou Kennedy Bay Ltd – Pukewharariki Ngahere and Wai Landscape Restoration Project
 - Mokaihaha Kokako Trust – Mokaihaha Kokako Project
3. There is a total of \$1.98 million being requested for the projects over a four-year period. After working closely with the applicants, staff recommend a total of roughly \$1.63 million be granted for these projects over the four years.
4. Across the five projects, a total of 25.6 FTE will be allocated to support economic recovery for the region. In addition, a total of 25,000 hectares of the region or 1% of the region's total land area will receive predator control that will enable greater biodiversity gains.
5. Representatives from all groups will be present to provide a short presentation on their project and to answer questions from the Committee.

Staff Recommendation:

1. That the report "Natural Heritage Fund Applications" (Community Restoration Committee 22 July 2020) be received.
2. That a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$464,756 over four years to A Rocha Aotearoa be approved for the Karioi Project.
3. That a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$400,000 over four years to Moehau Environment Group be approved for the Field Operations for Landscape Predator Control project.
4. That a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$248,7070 be approved over four years to Whenuakiwi Trust for the Whenuakite Kiwi Care Project be approved.
5. That a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$390,038 over four years to Te Ara Hou Kennedy Bay for the Pukewharariki Ngahere and Wai Landscape Restoration Project be approved.
6. That a Natural Heritage Fund grant of \$135,031 over two years to the Mokaihaha Trust for the Mokaihaha Kokako Project be approved.
7. That all grants be subject to:
 - (i) the preparation of a funding deed,
 - (ii) each annual instalment of the grant be conditional upon the satisfactory evaluation by staff of annual progress reports from the applicant.

Public Excluded

6. The following good reason(s) to withhold this report from the public exists under Section 6 and/or 7 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA), in accordance with Section 48(1)(a):
 - Protect information where the making available of the information
 - a. would disclose a trade secret; or
 - b. would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information (section 7(2)(b)(i) and (ii) of the Act)
 - Prevent the disclosure or use of official information for improper gain or improper advantage (section 7(2)(j) of the Act)
 - that the exclusion of the public from the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting is necessary to enable the local authority to deliberate in private on its decision or recommendation in any proceedings to which this paragraph applies

Background

7. Natural Heritage Fund budget

The purpose of the Natural Heritage Fund is to help implement council's commitment to preserving the natural heritage of the region – native plants and animals, threatened ecosystems, outstanding landscapes and the natural character of waterways and the coast.

Natural heritage projects are designed to secure permanent ecological assets for the people of the region. The fund may be used to:

- protect special significant natural heritage places (especially on private land) in perpetuity and in partnership with others (this may involve the purchase of land),
 - support large, well-established community groups with an excellent track record of managing significant natural areas,
 - assist iwi Māori who are mana whenua to exercise kaitiakitanga at place; and/or
 - enhance the ecological value of existing public lands where there is demonstrable regional benefit.
8. The types of projects considered for funding should meet the following general principles:
 - achievement of landscape-scale outcomes, via well-integrated and connected areas of ecological significance,
 - multi-stakeholder and collaborative in nature with funding contributions from other partners,
 - demonstrate potential for growth in both area under management and capacity,

- complement council's work and that of other organisations; and
- maximise collaboration between iwi Māori and other partners.

9. The Natural Heritage Fund has been in place since 2005 and is derived from the Natural Heritage Targeted Rate of \$5.80 per property. The balance for the year ending 30 June 2020 of the Natural Heritage Fund is \$1,029,000. This includes the reserve and considers the current commitments to multi-year grants. Any unallocated funds are carried forward to the next financial year (Table 1).

Table 1: Natural Heritage Fund Forecast to 2023/24, showing annual budget plus reserve (\$000) as of 29 June 2020

Natural Heritage Reserve	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Actual	Actual	LTP	LTP	LTP	LTP	LTP	LTP
Opening balance	1,387	1,351	1,029	1,081	1,121	1,535	2,021	2,519
Plus Budget	769	755	768	802	814	825	836	848
Less committed funding for:								
Maungatautari	(350)	(350)	(350)	(350)				
Moehau Environment Group	(89)	(89)						
A Rocha NZ	(101)	(101)						
Coromandel Walkways - Ring Beach	(11)	(40)	(40)					
Pirongia Restoration Society		(84)	(74)	(79)	(63)			
Tui 2000 - Waiwhakareke Park	(77)	(82)	(77)					
Matahuru Wetland		(84)						
Mahakirau Forest Estate	(34)	(35)	(36)					
Waiotaka River Forest	(41)	(44)						
Other	(102)	(168)	(138)	(333)	(337)	(339)	(338)	(337)
Interest Received on Reserve		21	30	27	26	26	26	28
Labour		(74)	(68)	(160)	(161)	(162)	(162)	(162)
Direct Costs		(11)	(10)	(11)	(11)	(11)	(11)	(11)
Allocated Costs		(104)	(91)	(189)	(191)	(192)	(192)	(191)
Surplus/ (Deficit)	(36)	(322)	52	40	414	486	498	511
Closing Balance	1,351	1,029	1,081	1,121	1,535	2,021	2,519	3,030

Current NHF applications

10. Five applications have been submitted for NHF grants to be considered at this meeting. The five applications are all large landscape-scale predator control programmes:

Table 2: Current Natural Heritage Fund applications

APPLICANT	PROJECT	REQUESTED FUNDING
Te Ara Hou Kennedy Bay Ltd	Pukewharariki Ngahere and Wai Landscape Restoration Project	\$396,038 over four years
A Rocha Aotearoa	Karioi Project	\$800,344 over four years
Moehau Environment Group	Field Operations for Landscape Predator Control Programme	\$400,000 over four years
Mokaihaha Kokako Trust	Mokaihaha Kokako Project	\$135,031 over two years
Whenuakiwi Trust	Whenuakite Kiwi Care Operational Programme	\$248,707 over four years

11. Each application has been submitted using an application form template for NHF community group projects. Applicants are asked to prepare their application in a way that responds to how their project meets the following criteria:

- What is the environmental opportunity or problem being addressed with this project?
- What solution or action will you be implementing?
- What is the ecological significance of the area?
- Is the project part of a larger, ongoing programme?
- How does the project complement other existing/previous initiatives?
- Is the project in a priority catchment?
- How does the project fit with the RPS and other Council policies?
- How will the regional community benefit from the project?
- How does the project facilitate meaningful and effective participation with Māori?
- What level of funding and support is being provided by partner organisations?
- How will the project be maintained?

12. Additional information has been supplied with each application including a detailed budget, letters of support, maps, and photos.

13. The allocation of grants through Council's Natural Heritage Partnership Programme should follow these principles:

- Grants will be allocated lawfully, transparently, and prudently
- Decisions are clear, and adequate records are kept of both successful and unsuccessful applications
- Accountability for the grant received is in proportion to the amount (i.e. not too onerous)
- Management of conflicts of interest
- Fair and equitable distribution of grants.

14. The impact of the requested funds on the NHF budget (shown previously in Table 1) is presented below. If all applications are funded to the full amount requested, there will be no ability to fund any other applications from the Natural Heritage Fund in 2021/22 or 2022/23, with only \$379,000 of available funding in 2023/24.

Table 3: Natural Heritage Fund Forecast to 2023/24, showing impact of current applications to full amount requested

Natural Heritage Reserve	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	Actual	Actual	LTP	LTP	LTP	LTP	LTP	LTP
Opening balance	1,387	1,351	1,029	562	33	(3)	379	1,215
Plus Budget	769	755	768	802	814	825	836	848
Less committed funding:	(805)	(1077)	(715)	(762)	(400)			
Less current applications:								
<i>A Rocha Karioi</i>			(196)	(202)	(203)	(201)		
<i>Moehau Environment Group</i>			(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)		
<i>Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group</i>			(13)	(71)	(72)	(93)		
<i>Te Ara Hou Kennedy Bay</i>			(143)	(129)	(75)	(49)		
<i>Mokaihaha Kokako Trust</i>			(68)	(67)				
Closing Balance	1,351	1,029	562	33	(3)	379	1,215	2,063

15. At the Committee workshop on 7 July, councillors asked for a summary of the labour hours and FTE requested across all five applications. This is shown in the Table below:

Table 4: Labour/FTE requests summarised across all applications (staff only; not contractors)

APPLICANT	Labour/FTE requests from the NHF from five applications			
	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
Te Ara Hou Kennedy Bay Ltd	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.9
A Rocha Aotearoa	2.2	2.3	2.8	2.7
Moehau Environment Group	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Mokaihaha Kokako Trust	0	0	0	0
Whenuakiwi Trust	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	6	6.1	6.6	6.9

16. The applications are presented below.

A Rocha Aotearoa – The Karioi Project

17. A Rocha Aotearoa NZ (A Rocha NZ) is a non-profit, volunteer conservation organisation established in New Zealand in 2007. A Rocha NZ is part of A Rocha International, a Christian organisation employing professional managers, scientists and educators engaging communities in nature conservation, with branches in 19 countries. A Rocha NZ has six local branches in New Zealand and encourages New Zealanders to care for the environment through hands-on community-based conservation as well as running environmental education projects.
18. Since 2009, A Rocha has been actively working towards an integrated pest control programme to re-establish Karioi in Raglan as a seabird mountain. Karioi Maunga Ki Te Whenua Project (the Karioi Project) is A Rocha's flagship project in New Zealand. A Rocha coordinates volunteers and landowners to undertake trapping of predators to protect the remnant population of grey-faced petrel (Oi) on the coastal cliffs of Mount Karioi - while a wider programme of predator control to restore forest birds is being scaled up on the mountain each year. In addition to the biodiversity work, A Rocha also connects with large proportion of Raglan's population through an extensive conservation education and advocacy programme.
19. Mount Karioi's mountain to sea connectivity is rare in New Zealand and aligns with regional and national biodiversity priorities for protection across marine, terrestrial, and freshwater habitats and ecosystems. It is an outstanding coastal landscape and includes the nationally significant Te Toto Gorge volcanic amphitheatre.
20. The Karioi Project's predator control work comprises a network of 2,375 traps on 95km of tracks over 2500 hectares of coastline and on the mountain (all stoat control and including 500 hectares of multi-species control). These are checked fortnightly by volunteers (100 regular volunteers contributing 6,500 hours per year). In the last three years, there have been 22 Oi chicks fledged.
21. A Rocha also runs a Backyard Trapping Programme involving 230 households, with approximately 600 of the 2375 traps deployed in residents' backyards. An environmental education programme in schools runs complementary to the predator control programme, engaging children through three initiatives (1 - S7(2)(a) LG... 1 - S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987). Currently the Karioi Project employs 15 people part-time or 5.5 FTE.
22. A Rocha aims to establish and maintain a network of an extra 2000 bait stations and 800 traps on 800 hectares within the 2500 hectare stoat network to target rats and possums and to protect all resident native species (i.e. intensifying the existing project area). This is in addition to maintaining all their existing work and will be done progressively over the four years at 200 hectares per year. The desired outcome is to increase the breeding success of native species and allow the eventual self-introduction and translocation of other species of seabird and forest bird to refill vacant ecological niches.
23. Whaingaroa tangata whenua own 426 hectares on Mount Karioi and are the kaitiaki of the maunga, with the local marae providing verbal support for the project. 1 - S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987 partner with the project and 1 - S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987 have been a main contractor. Mana whenua are part of the Karioi team of paid staff.

24. This funding application seeks a grant to cover mostly labour costs for the following tasks:

- Project manager salary
- Volunteer coordination, backyard hub coordination and ranger hours
- Project expansion/intensification
- Expanding the backyard trapping programme
- Training and coordinating the volunteer network
- Growing the seabird monitoring programme

Funding is also requested for track cutting, vehicle maintenance, marketing, health and safety, trap materials, monitoring equipment and miscellaneous equipment costs.

The total grant requested is \$800,344 over four years (Year 1 \$195,288; Year 2 \$201,608; Year 3 \$202,544; Year 4 \$200,904).

25. The total cost of the project is \$2,936,138. A total of \$468,750 has been confirmed from other parties including the ^{1 - S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987}, Lotteries, and other funders. ^{2 - S7(2)(j) LGOIMA 1987}. A further \$980,044 is identified as either future applications or likely donations.

26. A Rocha is a repeat applicant to the NHF, having received \$429,000 over four years from July 2016 to June 2020. This grant assisted A Rocha to purchase traps and other materials, employ contractors to extend the predator trap network, fund project coordination and administration, health and safety compliance, vehicle maintenance and project promotion costs. A Rocha representative will speak about the impact of this grant at the Committee meeting.

27. The Karioi Project is a long-term project that will extend beyond the period of this funding proposal. Seabirds migrate vast distances across the globe and over 80 species of seabird attempt to breed in New Zealand – yet most only succeed on offshore islands where predators have been eliminated. Staff see the Karioi project as one of the flagship community projects in the region with the potential to become a nexus of biodiversity on the West Coast. The project is underpinned by sound monitoring, careful planning, and specific objectives.

28. A Rocha is a well-organised, professionally led community conservation group. The chances of this project succeeding are high, given the extent of engagement by the Raglan community in the project already. The Karioi project is unique in its mountain to sea connectivity, and particularly for its coastal aspects and focus on seabirds. A Rocha maintain a good working relationship with their funders and keep DOC and Council well informed of their progress. The project has attracted a multitude of funders which emphasises public confidence in the project.

29. Staff support the Karioi Project’s intentions and recognise the immense value to the community. The project labour force has grown considerably from two part-time staff to 5.5 FTE in the four years since the first NHF grant was awarded. However, A Rocha’s grant request is more than double that of any of the other projects presented here yet the biodiversity values are similar if the level of ecological significance for the areas are considered. Furthermore, the impact of an \$800,000 grant on the NHF budget projected forward does mean that there will be no funds left to support other projects in the region for the next two years at least.

30. It is therefore recommended that this project be partly supported by providing 50% funding for the staff positions and full funding for the other project costs. This would enable A Rocha to leverage the Council contribution to seek the remainder of the funding from other funders. The recommended grant would therefore be:

A Rocha	TOTAL	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Requested	\$800,344	\$195,288	\$201,608	\$202,544	\$200,904
Recommended	\$464,756	\$120,644	\$118,304	\$112,272	\$113,536

Moehau Environment Group

31. Moehau Environment Group (MEG) is an incorporated society which has undertaken community-driven, large-scale pest control and biodiversity management projects in the northern Coromandel for over 15 years. The group's purpose is "restoring, connecting and protecting the biodiversity and habitats of Coromandel North".
32. Formed in 2000, the group has over 100 members and approximately 30 active volunteers and operates over an area of approximately 15,000 hectares. The area includes approximately 430 private properties (including 22 QEII covenants covering 1,300 hectares) and various classifications of public conservation land that run from coast to coast. MEG's operational area adjoins two large public conservation lands - Mount Moehau/Moehau Kiwi Sanctuary and Papa Aroha.
33. Almost all the areas MEG operates in are classified as Significant Natural Areas mostly of regional and national significance with some of international significance. Much of the area is regenerating coastal and lowland forest of different vegetation assemblages (including kauri, pohutukawa, hard beech and taraire) and linked to saltmarsh wetland areas near the coast. As well as being an important area for Coromandel brown kiwi, many other endemic species are present including various skink and gecko species (e.g. Coromandel striped gecko), pateke, bittern, kaka, fernbird, Archey's and Hochstetter's frogs and banded rail.
34. MEG's activities include planning and undertaking pest control (trapping and bait lines), building and maintaining tracks, monitoring bird populations, participating in the "Operation Nest Egg" programme for transferring kiwi to Motutapu Island, building and distributing trap boxes, eradicating noxious weeds and planting. Alongside animal pest and weed control programmes MEG is also involved in environmental education and advocacy and community outreach. In addition to employing local people, MEG continues to support neighbouring community groups through the provision of information and advice and undertaking pest control in adjacent areas.
35. The main tenets of MEG's predator control are programmed possum control on a three-year rotation and ongoing mustelid and rodent control over several different project areas to protect kiwi. Australasian bittern is also a focus in the wetland areas. There are 3,300 rat and stoat traps, plus several automated possum/rat traps, ferret and cat traps serviced by the group.
36. MEG employs a part-time Community Engagement Manager and Operations Manager respectively, along with a field team of four FTE's. Volunteers contribute over 5,500 hours per year.
37. This funding application seeks a grant to secure 1.5 FTE for the field team, as well as operating funding for possum and predator control:
 - 2 - S7(2)(j) LGOIMA... Rat Attack – servicing 1756 traps over 350ha
 - Mustelid Control – servicing 1200 DOC200 traps over 11,950ha
 - 2 - S7(2)(j) LGOIMA 1987 Rodent & Cat Control – servicing 193 traps over 75ha
 - Possum Control – servicing bait stations over 3200 haFunding is requested for \$400,000 split evenly at \$100,000 per year for four years.
38. The total cost of the project is \$2,085,687. A total of \$308,183 has been confirmed from other parties including DOC, Kiwis for Kiwi, Lotteries and two local businesses. There are also pending funding applications for \$262,080 from DOC.
39. Recently, DOC and the Pare Hauraki Collective have been undertaking scoping for "The Moehau Project"-an iwi led biocultural restoration project. Initial discussions between DOC, Pare Hauraki Collective and the Council have identified the opportunity to work more closely with MEG as the project moves into planning stages for aligned project outcomes.
40. MEG is a repeat applicant to the NHF, having received \$407,000 over four years from July 2016 to June 2020. This grant assisted MEG to purchase materials and upgrade tracks and trap infrastructure, maintain and

extend their predator control, control plant pests, and undertake associated education, advocacy, and landowner liaison. MEG representatives will speak about the impact of this grant at the Committee meeting.

41. Staff have worked closely with MEG particularly in the last two years to gain a better understanding of the breadth of their operations. We have helped them to define the parameters for each of their project areas, and with the help of a facilitator they have developed a strategic plan and set of priorities (see application). Staff are keen to see MEG prepare an outcome monitoring plan that details the methodology for measuring trapping success and threatened species responses (outcomes). This could be a condition of the funding deed if this application is successful.
42. There is no other community group that undertakes conservation and predator control at the scale of MEG's operation. MEG is an effective and stable group and represents one of the most successful community conservation programmes in the country. In 2012, MEG was nationally recognised with a Green Ribbon Award for protecting biodiversity. They have a high skill base within the organisation, years of experience and excellent links to technical knowledge within the wider community and agencies.
43. Staff consider that the funding sought is reasonable, as it is a modest contribution to the labour costs of each of four separate operations within the total MEG area. In summary, the project presents an opportunity to strengthen an essentially continuous area of landscape predator control, protecting the internationally recognised biodiversity values of the northern Coromandel. Therefore, staff recommend that a grant of \$400,000 over four years to MEG be fully supported.

Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group

44. The Whenuakiwi Trust (trading as Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group, WKCG) was established in 2007 to protect Coromandel Brown kiwi in their habitat in the Whenuakite area, an area of regenerating coastal broadleaf and kauri forest lying between [redacted] and [redacted] LGOIMA 1987 on the on the [redacted] LGOI... of Coromandel Peninsula.
45. The project area comprises 3,554 hectares of which 2,570 hectares is private land (seven landowners) and 930 hectares is public conservation land (Coromandel Forest Park), known collectively as the Whenuakite Kiwi Recovery Area. The private land contains ten QEII covenants totalling 209 hectares. WKCG has a Management Agreement with DOC to undertake predator control on the public conservation land, and DOC funds aerial 1080 operations every 3-4 years (with the last operation occurring in 2019).
46. The entire project area is almost all classified as nationally significant, under-represented coastal secondary forest providing the largest intact sequence of forest and streams from inland to the coast in the Tairua Ecological District. Along with being a stronghold for kiwi in the southern Coromandel area, the area is also home to large populations of kereru and kaka, plus bittern and pateke, as well as important flora including at least one threatened plant (*Pimelea tomentosa*).
47. WKCG employs one contractor (Operations Manager) and is supported by around a dozen volunteers. The Operations Manager services and oversees 553 traps on 110km of trapline, including coordinating the volunteers who maintain around 25% of the traps. All introduced species are targeted although the focus is on mustelids - with rats, hedgehogs and feral cats also controlled.
48. In the early years of WKCG's work (prior to the establishment of the Trust), a survey of kiwi showed that the group's predator control work had helped kiwi numbers double in more than four years. Kiwi call and acoustic surveys showed 29 adult kiwi in 2001, 68 kiwi in 2005 and 98 kiwi in 2010 with an estimated population of 75 pairs. A survey in May 2020 identified 133 pairs.
49. WKCG also liaise closely with other Coromandel predator control groups including [redacted] 1 - S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987 [redacted] 1 - S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987 and [redacted] 1 - S7(2)(a) LGOI... The Operations Manager is also a Trustee of the Predator Free Hauraki Coromandel Community Trust. Where time allows, WKCG members also give talks to local groups and help the Whenuakite School run a trapline.

50. This funding application seeks a grant to cover the Operations Manager's wages plus some materials (e.g. replacement traps, bait, office costs). Funding is requested for \$248,707 split over four years (Year 1 \$12,860; Year 2 \$71,234; Year 3 \$71,944 and Year 4 \$92,669).
51. The total cost of the project is \$528,063. A total of \$57,330 toward the Year 1 costs have been confirmed from other funders including DOC, Kiwis for Kiwi and the E B Firth Trust.
52. Ngāti Hei and Ngāti Porou have provided letters of support and appreciation of the WKCG's efforts in kiwi protection in the Whenuakite area and alignment with the wider goals for iwi involvement in conservation.
53. WKCG received a \$39,970 Environmental Initiatives Fund grant in 2017 split over two years to help cover the costs of the Ops Manager's wages. The project has not received any other funding from Council.
54. This is a community-driven initiative that is entirely consistent with the purpose of the NHF and the growing Predator Free movement in the Coromandel Peninsula. The group's track record, perseverance and community support plus the large area and volunteer base are reflected in the 10% annualised increase in kiwi numbers. WKCG is seen as a strong leader in the conservation community and readily take on other conservation matters including kauri dieback and the control of other introduced species such as wilding pines. The Executive Director for Kiwis for Kiwi describe the group as "the stalwart of kiwi conservation on the Coromandel Peninsula".
55. The group recognises that saving the kiwi is a long-term business and this is evident in the ongoing support that they receive from DOC and Kiwi for Kiwis. Staff consider that the costs that are detailed in the application are reasonable for the size of the area and the varied activities that the Operations Manager undertakes. Full funding of \$248,707 is recommended for this project to continue predator control in this important area of the Coromandel. Additional funding support of \$20,000 to enable outcome monitoring could also be allocated if Council deems it appropriate for year 4 of the project recognising it will impact future funding available for Council to award.

Te Ara Hou Kennedy Bay Ltd – Pukewharariki Ngahere and Wai Landscape Restoration Project

56. Te Ara Hou Kennedy Bay Ltd (Te Ara Hou) is a registered company and the environmental arm of Te Ahi Kaa, Ngāti Porou's Hauraki training and social service unit. It was established in 2019 in anticipation of the opportunity to lead and conduct aerial 1080 operations on Māori land in partnership with DOC and Council for the Kennedy Bay to Papa Aroha coast to coast area in Coromandel. Te Ara Hou's philosophy is to use Te Ao Māori, Mātauranga, Manaakitanga, Whakawhanaungatanga, western science and leading conservation strategies to create a healthy environment, healthy people, and a healthy future for the next generations.
57. The aim of this mountain to sea project is to provide a complete ecosystem management unit to create environmental, cultural, and social change in how people value the environment and to protect the lowlands and coastal environment around Kennedy Bay. There are several parts to the project:
- Maintain predator and weed control around the Kennedy Bay [1 - S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987] and [1 - S7(2)(a) LG... [1 - S7(2)... [1 - S7(2)(a) LG... and coastline to [1 - S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987] supported by the coast-to-coast Kennedy Bay-Papa Aroha four yearly aerial 1080 operations,
 - Deliver mātauranga-western-science based education, cadetships and wananga/hui using digital information captured from the maintenance area with the aim of expanding this area, as well as measuring changes in the environment,
 - Investigate with private landowners a pest-proof, coast to coast predator fence linking two small iwi communities, Kennedy Bay and Kopuatauaki creating a 31,000-hectare low pest area to the north.
58. The 1,179-hectare project area comprises Māori land (537 hectares), public conservation land (195 hectares) and other private land (447 hectares). Much of the area comprises large contiguous, secondary coastal kauri forest, unmodified coastal pohutukawa/tawa/kowhai forest and two *Baumea*/manuka wetlands. The nationally and regionally significant areas contain kiwi, Hochstetter's frog and Coromandel striped gecko.

59. This funding application seeks a grant to cover a range of costs including:
- two Manager positions – the Te Ara Hou and Mātauranga Maori units respectively
 - administrative time
 - bait stations, bait, and contractor time
 - materials and construction of a back-country hut
 - willow control
 - traps and consumables.
60. The total grant requested is \$396,038 over four years (Year 1 \$143,290; Year 2 \$128,830; Year 3 \$74,630; Year 4 \$49,288). There is \$234,516 of confirmed or pending funding from other organisations including Te Ara Hou, Te Ahi Kaa, iwi landowners and local businesses. Council has not received a funding application from Te Ara Hou previously.
61. The grant request for Year 1 includes construction of a back-country hut (\$16,000). Building materials are specifically excluded from the NHF.
62. This application is part of a larger conservation programme in and around Kennedy Bay comprising aerial control, outcome monitoring including pest data, terrestrial and marine species monitoring, weed control, goat control and kauri dieback prevention. The project is embedded in mātauranga Māori and will be implemented in parallel with the Hauraki settlement in a way that allows Te Ara Hou to provide leadership in collaboration with agencies for pest control in the area. It is a unique project and staff recommend it be fully supported (with the exception of the \$16,000 towards the hut as mentioned above). The recommended grant would therefore be:

Te Ara Hou	TOTAL	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Requested	396,038	143,290	128,830	74,630	49,288
Recommended	380,038	127,290	128,830	74,630	49,288

Mokaihaha Kokako Trust – Mokaihaha Kokako Project

63. The Mokaihaha Kokako Trust (MKT) was formally established in June 2017 with the purpose: “to protect and restore Mokaihaha Ecological Area to a thriving ecosystem, supporting a large and resilient kokako population, providing educational and recreational opportunities for the South Waikato District and to be a showcase for community conservation”.
64. The 2,136-hectare Mokaihaha Ecological Area, located between Tokoroa and Rotorua, is the largest remaining block of the extensive native forest that once covered the Mamaku Plateau. The entire area is public conservation land. MKT has a Management Agreement with DOC to undertake predator control on the reserve for the two years between aerial 1080 operations undertaken by the department.
65. The unlogged portions of the ecological area are mainly rimu/matai-tawa-kamahi forest. In parts, the high-quality stands of podocarps resemble those of Pureora and Whirinaki. North Island kokako, kaka, NZ falcon, kakariki (yellow-crowned parakeet) and whitehead have been recorded in the reserve along with more common bush birds including robin, tomtit and both species of cuckoo. Both species of bats have been recorded. The reserve meets the Regional Policy Statement criteria of national significance.
66. Mokaihaha contains a significant population of kokako, which is genetically important due to the population never having dropped below 40 birds. The area has been identified as one of the top five priority sites in New Zealand for kokako. A kokako census undertaken in May 2018 identified 94 birds including 43 pairs in the 850-hectare Mokaihaha West area. There are few birds in the remainder of the ecological area, which indicates that the current bait station lines, which are maintained by MKT to target rats, need to be extended in order to allow the birds greater breeding territory.

67. The group currently maintains 840 bait stations in the West block. This funding application seeks a grant to cover the costs of a contractor and materials to install extra baitlines and 1300 baitstations across the remaining 1286 hectares, and the installation of 267 stoat traps across the whole 2136 hectares. Funding is requested for \$135,031 split over two years (\$68,499 in Year 1, and \$66,532 in Year 2).
68. The total cost of the project is \$377,891. A total of \$181,000 has been confirmed from other parties including DOC, South Waikato District Council, Oji Fibre Solutions, Hancock Forest Management and Forest & Bird.
69. MKT is working toward greater iwi involvement in the planning, management, and operations in Mokaihaha. Raukawa Charitable Trust has been fully supportive of the project with a view to greater participation long term, including having a representative on the Trust (there are currently two iwi trustees from Ngāti Kea Tuara and Ngāti Whakaeu).
70. A steering group that was the precursor organisation to MKT received a \$30,000 Environmental Initiatives Fund grant in 2014 to help set up the original baitlines. The project has not received any other funding from Council.
71. DOC has made a commitment to fund an aerial pest control operation over the entire Mokaihaha area every three years. The next operation is due in Spring 2021. While this effectively controls rats and possums, predator populations (especially stoats) will increase in the in-between years, and intensive ground-based control over the larger site will achieve greater kokako population growth as well as helping other native species to flourish.
72. This is a reasonably large multi-year pest control operation that sits within a larger vision of community-driven ecological restoration and economic development. The project has good partnership arrangements among non-profit community groups, iwi, the local council, DOC, and businesses. The many commitments of funding made to date by these partners is a sign of their confidence in the project.
73. Although the volunteer component of this project is low, MKT is looking to increase the pool of volunteers from the local community long-term.
74. Staff consider that this is an important conservation project and recommend it worthy of full funding of \$135,031 over two years as it will have positive biodiversity outcomes for the area's flora and fauna with the potential to become a "Halo" site as birds spill out into the surrounding landscape.

Conclusion

75. The five NHF applications presented here demonstrate a collective community effort for predator control over nearly 25,000 hectares of the region or 1% of the region's total land area. They are ambitious in scale and include some of the region's most ecologically significant areas.
76. Collaboration between all landowners, Māori, DOC, Council and local businesses underpin these projects demonstrated in the wide range of co-funding partners for each project.
77. Community involvement is key to each of these projects with volunteer efforts ranging from a few hundred hours to over 6000 hours per year. Most of the projects also contribute significantly to community wellbeing by enhancing the natural, human, social, and financial capital through their biodiversity outcomes, outreach programmes and employment of local people.
78. Council support of these projects is a small step towards a predator-free Waikato region, and demonstrates our commitment to community-led restoration

Attachments

1. Natural Heritage Fund Application: A Rocha Aotearoa NZ – The Karioi Project
2. Natural Heritage Fund Application: Moehau Environment Group – MEG Field Operations
3. Natural Heritage Fund Application: Whenuakiwi Trust – Whenuakite Kiwi Care Operational Programme
4. Natural Heritage Fund Application: Te Ara Hou Kennedy Bay Ltd – Pukewharariki Ngahere and Wai Project
5. Natural Heritage Fund Application: Mokaihaha Kokako Trust – Mokaihaha Kokako Project

Public Excluded

- Redaction (22 redactions)

2 Privilege / Exemption reasons used:

1 -- "S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987" (15 instances)

2 -- "S7(2)(j) LGOIMA 1987" (7 instances)

Redacted pages:

Page 1, S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987, 2 instances

Page 5, S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987, 4 instances

Page 6, S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987, 1 instance

Page 6, S7(2)(j) LGOIMA 1987, 2 instances

Page 7, S7(2)(j) LGOIMA 1987, 2 instances

Page 8, S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987, 3 instances

Page 8, S7(2)(j) LGOIMA 1987, 3 instances

Page 9, S7(2)(a) LGOIMA 1987, 5 instances