



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION REFORM

Introduction

United**Future** believes that the Department of Conservation should be responsive to the interests of all stakeholders when administering the conservation estate – including outdoor recreation groups, environmental organisations, the business sector, and individual New Zealanders in general.

We are particularly concerned at the attitude of the Department towards recreational users such as large game hunters and fishers. As a consequence, United**Future** wants to ensure that the Department of Conservation is required to consult with, and genuinely take into account the views of all relevant stakeholder groups in a fair, balanced and transparent way. Such a process may not change land management outcomes on the conservation estate, but it will at least mean that everyone is able to receive a fair hearing and have their views taken properly into consideration.

Regarding pest control, United**Future** believes that more time and money should be allocated for this important task.

The exponential increase in exotic pest populations, such as that which has occurred with rats and mustelids in the Southern Beech Forests, along with other pests such as the Australian Brush Tailed opossum and German wasps, need to be properly scientifically managed. These pests, among others, have the potential to rapidly destroy large populations of New Zealand's native fauna and flora.

It is United**Future** policy to:

- Amend the Conservation Act to ensure that the interests of all conservation estate stakeholders are taken properly into account when decisions are made (including the "national interest") to improve the Department's accountability by preventing it from no longer being both law maker and law enforcer;
- Review the Department of Conservation's advocacy responsibilities to ensure that they do not abuse taxpayer's money to waste ratepayer's money in unnecessary appeals against local authorities in the Environment Court. Limit submissions to local authority processes only.
- Restructure the Department of Conservation into at least two semi-autonomous divisions - one division responsible for the "conservation" aspects such as scientific research, pest control, and native plant and animal stewardship; the other division responsible for the "recreation" aspects such as land and waterway access, track and hut maintenance, game management, and tourism;
- Remove all Department of Conservation responsibilities for managing the marine reserve application process (and prohibit it from proposing or initiating applications for new marine reserves);
- Establish transparent Department of Conservation public application and decision-making procedures for making decisions regarding use of the conservation estate;
- Provide additional funding for pest control measures that target the most noxious and destructive pests, e.g. possums, rats, and mustelids etc once thorough consultation has taken place with relevant local community and recreational groups.
- Although we are supportive of most current pest control methods, United**Future** is opposed to the aerial application of 1080 unless it is proven beyond reasonable doubt that the terrain in the treatment area is such that it would be impossible to carry out a successful ground baiting operation.
- Ensure all Conservation Boards are democratically elected.