

DOC announces tahr cull at eleventh hour

The Game Animal Council is extremely disappointed at DOC's failure to carry out meaningful consultation with the hunting sector when it comes to managing tahr.

"We, along with other members of the Tahr Plan Implementation Liaison Group, received the final Tahr Control Plan from DOC at 11.03pm last night, just hours before operations were due to start," says Game Animal Council Chair Don Hammond.

"Only 2 days was provided for consultation. The final plan being released minutes before it comes into effect and with almost no change from the original version indicates a pre-determined outcome and the hunting sector was not intended to be part of the Plan development process."

"It is therefore not surprising that the Tahr Foundation have sought intervention from the courts."

The final Plan includes triple the amount of helicopter culling within the feral range along with the removal of all tahr, including mature bulls, from Aoraki/Mt Cook and Westland Tai Poutini National Parks.

"If the operations are completed, they will devastate tahr hunting in New Zealand," says Hammond.

The Plan also states that DOC will work with stakeholders to develop a research and monitoring programme.

"They have been telling us of the need for a plan for research and monitoring for two years now and nothing has happened," says Hammond. "While development of a plan for research is vital, it is the implementation phase of that plan that needs to get underway urgently. The risk is further delays will mean there are very few tahr left to monitor anyway."

"This will have huge impacts on both the recreational and commercial hunting sectors just when we need all the jobs we can muster."

"It is a sad day, not just for hunting in New Zealand, but also for the principle of proper consultation by government agencies."

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