Planning your pest control project

A guide for using the pest animal control planning template for community groups

Auckland Council
Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau

Foreword

A project plan can be anything from a simple one pager to a detailed restoration plan. For most community groups, a simple plan should be enough. However it's essential to have one, so that you know what it is you want to achieve and how you're going to get there. You can also use it to measure your success and be a reference point if you change your methods in the future.

Having a plan allows you or your group to effectively communicate your needs and intentions to neighbours, on funding applications and to new group members.

Spending time considering your actions in the initial phase of your project can save huge amounts of time and effort once the project commences. It can even make the difference between success and failure.
A plan should be revised at regular intervals, so what you put in this one isn't what you'll necessarily be doing forever. There may be several phases over several years.

Regardless of the size of your project, there's quite a bit to think about. To clarify what we mean, we've used prompts to guide you for most of the questions.

If you need any help with this template, or would like your plan reviewed once you've finished drafting it, contact us at biosecurity@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Table of Contents

1   Site details and features

Where do you want to work and what are you protecting?

What you are looking to protect will affect the species of pest plants and animals you target, the frequency you target them, and will guide key times when pest animals need to be at their lowest to aid your aims.

General information	
DETAILS	
Where is the project site?	*Ie the physical address* *For projects over several sites , on a peninsula or island, be as specific as possible and attach a map (you can print one off Google Maps for instance)*
What type of site(s) make up the project? Do you want to work on all or part of it?	*Is it private property, a reserve, a combination of these or something else?* *Are you focusing on one or two patches, or the whole area?*
What kind of activity happens there?	*If public land is it walking, picnics, general recreation etc?* *If private, is it residential, commercial or something else?*
Do you have the appropriate permission to carry out the work you want to do?	*eg if it's a reserve is it owned by council, Department of Conservation or someone else like local iwi? do you have permission to carry out your project?*
Is there any kind of special legal status on any of the property?	*eg are there SEAs (special ecological area) or a covenant? Are there any restrictions around what activites can take place there?*
FEATURES	
What types of ecosystem(s) are present?	*Eg wetland, coastal broadleaved forest, manuka scrub etc* *List all that apply. See the guide 'Indigenous terrestrial and wetland ecosystems of Auckland ' for more details*
Are there any threatened / protected native species present?	*If you're not sure, you can contact the Biodiversity team at* *biodiversity@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz*
What environmental pests are present?	*This includes both plants and animals, or diseases like kauri dieback. You may want to consider getting help to identify certain species.*
Reserve size	*Total hectares that will be under pest animal control*
Reserve shape	*This influences the reinvasion & validity of monitoring results*
What is the terrain and access like?	*Is it steep, flat or mixed? Are there easy access points?* *Is there a stream / waterway? Are there tracks, paths or boardwalks?*
Are there any other features to consider?	*Eg heritage buildings, power pylons, old mine shafts…..*

2   Target pests and control methods

What are your priorities?

This section is about your reasons for doing the work, and both short and long term aims.

| Target pests and control methods	
PEST SPECIES	
What species do you want to control?	*Is it pest plants, pest animals, or both? Be as prescriptive as possible now to avoid disagreement or confusion later on. Of course you can always adjust or change your list if you need to.*
Which ones are your top priorities?	*There can be more than one but there shouldn't be too many* *To channel efforts in the right direction you should decide on this before you start.*
Why are they your priority?	*Are they the most abundant weed? The animal doing the most damage? The biggest threat to the survival of species X?*
What phase of control will you be doing for each species?	*ie an initial knockdown, maintenance level or last remaining few. Specify for each species. This is for when your plan is new – you will want to revise this after an agreed amount of time eg annually, two years or ……don't forget to take into account what you have already been doing*

What methods of control will you use for each species?	*It may help to list these one by one; this section could get quite large.*
	i.e Pest Animal Species:
	    1. *Control Tool: (bait or trap)*
	    2. *Spacing's: X m along a line, lines X m apart*
	    3. *Programme (information from AC Toxin & Trapping guide)*
	
	Please refer to the 'Guiding principles' and decision matrix documents when planning and deciding on your pest animal control. These are available from the Auckland Council Biosecurity team biosecurity@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
	You will need to take into account an animal's behaviour, home range and breeding season amongst other things. When looking at a site in the urban area it is important to use control tools that have lower secondary positioning risks associated.

How long will use this method before monitoring to check success/ revise the method used?	*Doing the same thing for years on end may not be the most efficient use of time and resources. We recommend you change what control methods you are using to match when the pest plant or animal population level changes.* *Again, it may help to list this species by species.*

Site Map: including control tool layout.

Key locations and maps

Your plan should also include a map of the area(s) you are working in, and the locations you are going to be controlling pest plants and / or animals at.
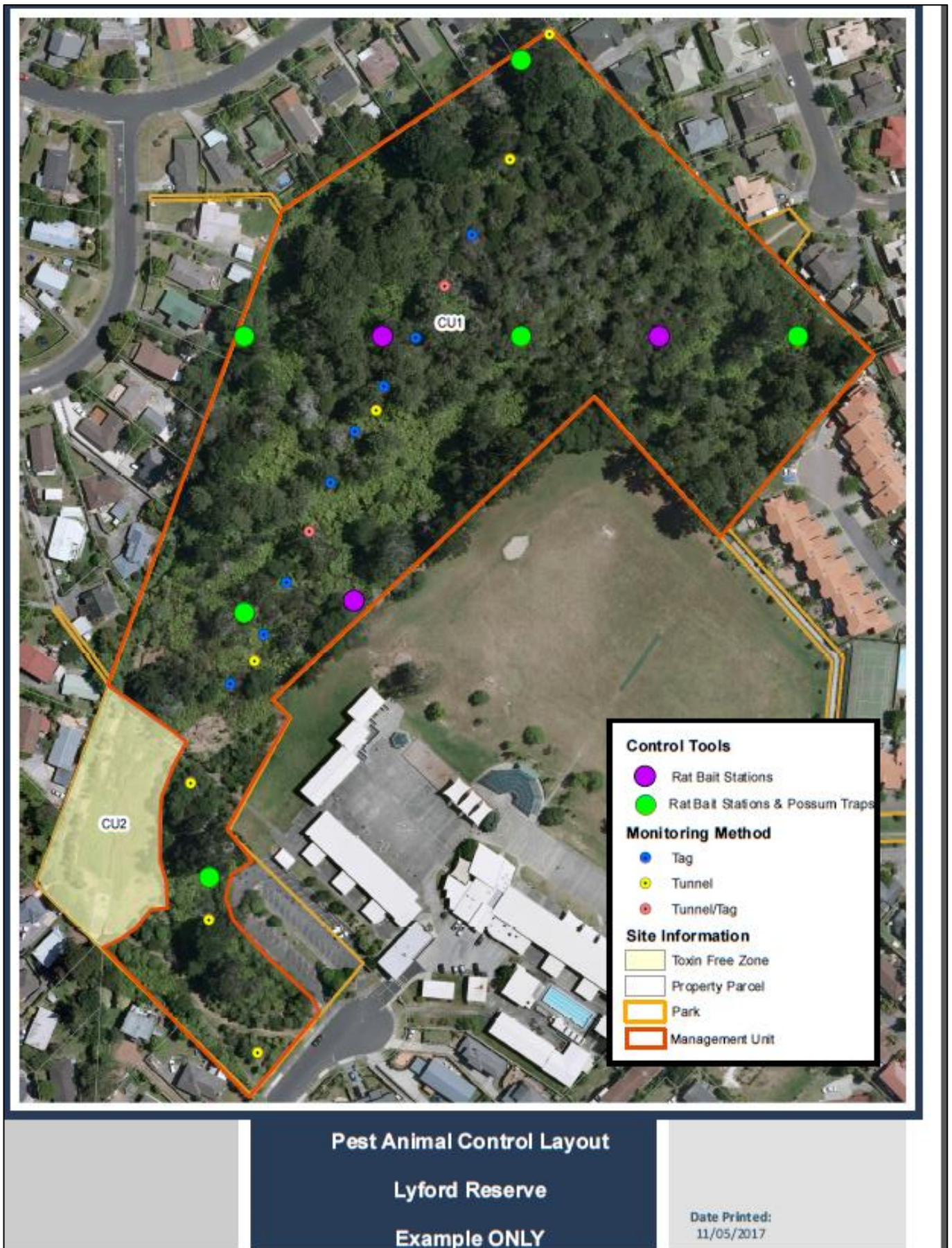You could also include key habitats for both native and pest species, or features like contours

These can be on different maps – it could be easier to read, especially if there are several aspects to your project.

[Something like:] You can use online systems like CatchIT [Link] to make these maps (and also to track your captures). You could also use the council's online mapping system or Google Earth to draw a map like the one below, or you could simply print off an image from Google Maps and hand draw on it.
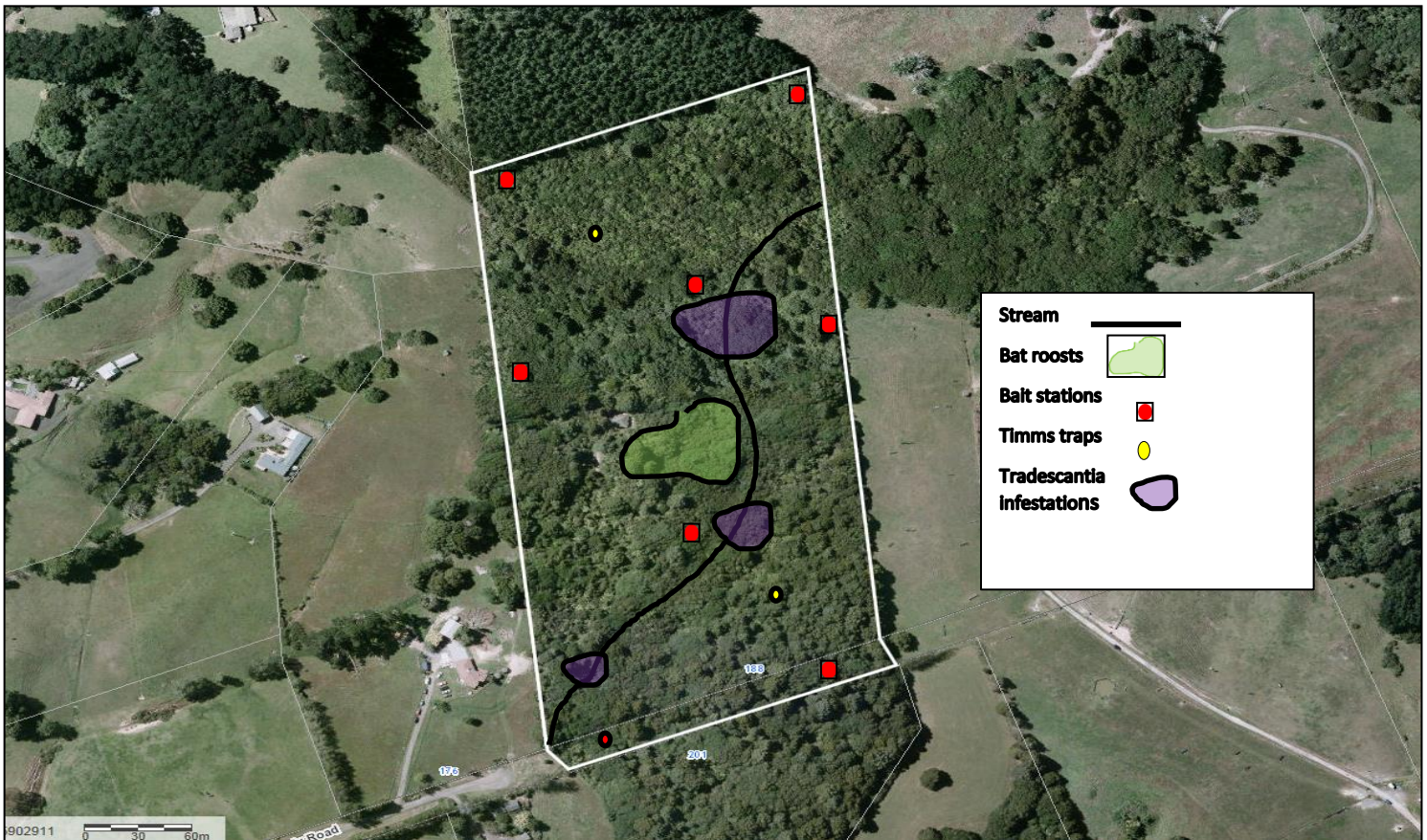
In this example, there are several lines of bait stations and traps over a wide area

Example of control tool layout;

- including pest animal control tools & monitoring lines

Pest Animal Control Layout

Lyford Reserve

Example ONLY

Date Printed:
11/05/2017

3   Your goal and vision

What do you want to achieve and what specific outcomes do you want?

In this section you need to combine some statements about the values you are trying to protect at your project site and any future goals you would like to achieve for it.

For example:

We have been working on weed control in Clevedon Scenic Reserve and want to further restore the area with pest control to enable seedling regeneration and increased bird life. We have been noticing some pest activity by possums and rats, and feel these are having a negative impact on the ability for the reserve to flourish. The site is 94.985 ha of mature Kauri, Taraire, Nikau and Puriri forest. It is within the catchment area for the Wairoa River.

We would like to achieve:

- A higher density of native bird populations with birds seen and heard more regularly.
- More seeds successfully germinating to increase the diversity in the reserve.
- The forest understory becoming denser.
- Native insects (weta) becoming more abundant.
- Canopy trees retaining their flowers for birds to feed on

Or it could be a brief sentence to describe the site once work is finished:

Eg Wairoa Stream will have a functioning riparian ecosystem with a community of native plants and animals representative of pre-European times.

Check out the next section for tips on how you may be able to check that your project is meeting its objectives.

4   Measuring success

Monitoring methods and targets for your project

There are some monitoring methods that can be used to measure progress of both plant and animal pest control, and some that are more specific.

They don't need to be complicated, but they do need to be able to show progress (or not) and be repeatable. Some examples are mentioned below.

Monitoring method	What it shows	How to do it

Photopoints
 	
Before, during and after shots of places around the project site
	• The changes over time in vegetation
	   o density, species composition, health
	• Can be an indicator of:
	   o Less predators (herbivores) present
	   o Less weed species inhibiting native and seedling growth
		• Take photos of and from the same points at regular intervals eg every 3 months
		• Mark or gps those points to enable accurate replication
		
		(see our *Taking photopoints* guide for more in-depth details)

Tracking tunnels	• Presence or absence* of species o Can be either pest species or natives depending on your focus • Changes to that over time	• Place tunnels in appropriate spots; put ink cards out at regular frequency eg every 3 or 6 months (see our *Tracking tunnels for community use* guide)
Wax tags	• Presence or absence* of certain vertebrate species eg rat or possum o Best used before and after a control round as a measure of effectiveness.	•
Motion sensor cameras	• Species behaviour and composition present*	•

*at time of monitoring round

(For a more comprehensive guide to monitoring see our *Pest Control in Auckland* guide)

Left: a possum after triggering a camera in the Hunua Ranges (Robert Vennell, 2014).

5   Tasks to help achieve your goals

What tasks and activities do you need to do to reach your goals?

In drawing up a plan, there will be many other aspects of the project and your wider group that you need to think about apart from what pests or weeds to control and where. These include:

- *Scope of project* – are you going to try and control or eradicate every pest present, or just the worst ones / (ie those with the biggest immediate impact).

- *Pre-start monitoring* – this is like a stock-take of the pests present in the area you're going to be working on, and provides a baseline for future monitoring (so you can measure your progress against something).

- *Work alongside stakeholders / land owners* – there may be a number of properties you want to work on, due the extent of the target pest or weed's established habitat. You may need to speak to them to get permission and support; there may be other community members indirectly affected by what you propose to do eg local iwi, landowners downstream etc – it always helps to have them alongside you.

- *Communicating your progress* – to these key stakeholders/influencers, and members of the community. This is often more important than people realise – you keep the support you have and gain more – and at the same time perhaps even more volunteers. Choosing the right method is key – it could be via Facebook, noticeboard, local paper or somehow else.

- *Stages for implementation* – especially if you have a big area you are intending to manage, it is easier to break the work up into stages. Expecting to complete it all at once or within a fixed short period of time can lead to disappointment. Often there will be an initial period of control, and then some follow-up control. State your intentions year by year – even break down into months or seasons.

- *Know the capacity of your group* to maintain what has been started – before you start! There is nothing worse than finding out partway through that you don't have enough people or knowledge to get the job done. If you know there might be a gap somewhere, make sure you know when, where from (eg the neighbourhood, or somewhere else) and how you're going to fill it.

What will these tasks cost and how will you fund them?

There are many parts to consider, and you don't want to get caught out by something you hadn't planned for.

Here are some of things you will need to know the costs for:
- Monitoring tools
- Total hardware cost for initial set up (can be staged)
- Ongoing costs (bait, replacement hardware, monitoring etc)
- Staff or volunteer training (e.g. Growsafe for spraying weeds)
- Protective gear

You should know where the funding is coming from for each phase (is it from grants, direct council support, fundraising, volunteers' own donations etc) so the project can keep momentum.

Familiarise yourself with the timing of your local board's funding rounds, and any other funds available in the region – some applications require a lot of information so you should leave plenty of time to complete them.
The local board and regional grant information is available on the Auckland Council website.
The Department of Conservation has a page on their website detailing other grants and funds - http://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/funding/other-funding-organisations/

For your reference….

The following is available from the Biosecurity and Biodiversity teams:

Biosecurity

- *Pest Control in Auckland* – a comprehensive guide of pest animal control in the region – includes information on species, methods and more

Fact sheets for specific weeds?

'How-to' guides for monitoring techniques:

- *Taking photopoints*
- *Tracking tunnels*

Email biosecurity@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz for your copy

Biodiversity

- Indigenous terrestrial and wetland ecosystems of Auckland

Email biodiversity@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz to find out how you can get a copy

The team also has a range of guides on protecting and planting for specific areas – these are available in pdf from the council website (go to Biodiversity on your property page)

Find out more:
phone 09 301 0101
or visit **aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/**

Auckland
Council
Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau