

1 Invited parties: Department of Conservation - Section 51(2)(c) wildlife approval report (dated 10 September 2025)

Table 1.1: Department of Conservation comment summary and applicant response

Response prepared by Ecology experts Chris Wedding, Treff Barnett and Jennifer Shanks, with input from the Applicant.

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1.1.1.	Section 3.1 – 3.2: Overview of DoC’s report	DOC and Stevenson Aggregates Limited have engaged post-lodgement to discuss any concerns as encouraged by the Panel Convener. This resulted in a revised Ecological Management Plan (EMP) (containing the Lizard Management Plan (LMP)) provided to DOC via email on 17 July 2025 (Appendix E). For the avoidance of doubt, all references to the EMP or LMP in this report refer to the 17 July versions unless specified otherwise. While DOC has communicated the need for the updated documents to be provided to the Panel, it is not yet clear whether the Panel has obtained this information. DOC does not consider the information in the Original EMP is sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the wildlife approval under the FTAA.	The Applicant through its experts engaged with DOC (23/09/2025) over the following issues as raised in their report: • Ecostack numbers and advance provision; • Approval to include pacific gecko and striped skink; • Term of Wildlife Approval (15 years); and • Provision of mouse control at the proposed release location(s). This discussion clarified that the lizard diversity and abundance is low, based on survey results which recorded 4 copper skinks in 2020, and one copper skink in 2021. No geckos were identified. A copy of the updated EMP with amendments to the LMP will be filed with the Applicant’s response on 1 October 2025, saved on the sharefile as <i>Sutton Block EMP – updated 17 July 2025</i>.
1.1.2.	Section 3.3: Overview of DoC’s report	Overall, while DOC believes the proposed management to be appropriate for some species of lizard, implementation of the LMP will provide minimal protection to salvaged lizards. It is unclear whether the replanted habitat will allow the lizard species to recolonise and persist. To improve protection for lizards upon release, DOC recommends changes to the staging of the eco-stacks, as well as increasing pest control to include mouse control. Subject to the recommended changes, DOC considers that the revised plan is only appropriate for four of the six species that approval is sought for. If approved, DOC recommends the approval is limited to copper skink, ornate skink, elegant gecko, and forest gecko. The applicant has provided conditions for the wildlife approval, which DOC has suggested revisions to (Appendix A). In the alternative, in order for approval for the other two species to be granted and ensure consistency with the purpose of the Wildlife Act, additional mitigation will be required to manage effects.	Replanted habitat. All of the species applied for (except for striped skink) are commonly encountered in young, regenerating vegetation. Copper and ornate skinks are commonly recorded in plantings, rough roadside grass and particularly where such areas support coarse woody or inorganic debris. Forest, green and pacific geckos are characteristically associated with pioneer vegetation types, particularly kanuka forest, and forest edges. The offset enhancement area supports 108 ha of pest control mixed indigenous forest, including kanuka forest. Provision of a greater number of ecostacks, in advance of vegetation removal The Applicant is happy to accommodate this. It is anticipated that such ecostacks would be provided by material onsite. As such, Stage 1 of the Project would rely on felled material to supply ecostacks. Therefore, indicative Stage 1 (years 1-3) will have a shorter advance provision (or would occur at the same time as relocation if lizards are present in initial areas of vegetation) than future indicative stages (Stages 2-5, or years 3 - 50). By indicative Stage 4, offset planting, including dense buffer planting around the current proposed lizard release site, will have been completed, and are expected to be no less than 25 years old by indicative Stage 4. Inclusion of pacific gecko The expectation for the Project is that copper skinks, forest gecko and pacific gecko are most likely to be encountered, with the latter species potentially occurring in epiphytic vegetation that would be transferred with ecostacks to lizard receptor sites. The Applicant therefore considers it appropriate to have pacific gecko included in any Wildlife Approval associated with the Project.

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			At the meeting with DOC on 23 September 2025, additional images of the currently identified receptor site, and also included alternative sites that would be connected and enhanced as part of the project offset where supplied, which the DOC may consider better suited to species such as pacific gecko (or less likely), striped skink. On 29 September 2025, DOC confirmed that it was satisfied with these suggestions. A copy of the email confirming DOC's position is saved to the Sharefile as <i>Wildlife Approval – DOC confirmation email dated 29 September 2025</i>.
1.1.3.	Section 3.4: Overview of DoC's report	A key concern for DOC is the proposed term of the approval. While the application did not specify a term for the wildlife approval, DOC inferred a 50-year duration based on the Project's lifespan, and the proposed staging in the LMP. DOC prefers a 10-year term to ensure the LMP and methodology stay up to date with best practice. DOC has proposed conditions that would provide for the protection of wildlife should the Panel accept a 50-year term.	As discussed, the Applicant acknowledge that DOC would expect the holder to apply for a variation beyond 10 years, which could provide for any improvements to best practice methods etc. The Applicant requests that the initial term be provided for 15 years, to align with the indicative Stages 1&2, which accommodates a contiguous strip of vegetation at the early stage of the Project. Following this, potential habitat may not be within the project impact area until indicative Stage 4 (40 years).
	Section 3.5: Overview of DoC's report	As stated in Section 3.5 of DOC's report, they hold some concerns about the application but consider <u>that if the recommendations outlined below and the conditions outlined in Appendix A are imposed, it would be appropriate to grant the wildlife approval</u>. In summary, if the Panel is of a mind to grant approval, DOC recommends the following:	
1.1.4.		the approval requires the LMP (as amended to respond to DOC's recommendations in this report) to be followed;	
1.1.5.		approval is limited to copper skink, ornate skink, elegant gecko, and forest gecko; and/or additional mitigation is required for any approval for pacific gecko and striped skink; and	The Applicant requested the addition of pacific gecko to be included in the Wildlife Approval, as per the reasoning set out above. On 29 September 2025, DOC confirmed that it was satisfied with the inclusion of pacific gecko, noting that in particular the transfer of epiphytes as part of the ecostacks will be particularly valuable as these now provide more plausible refuges for the arboreal species. While epiphyte transfer is not specifically identified in the LMP for transfer, epiphyte transfer forms a key part of the EMP, specifically Section 3.4- salvage of forest resources within the Sutton Block. We will update the LMP to specifically address epiphyte transfer for lizard habitat enhancement and ecostack creation.
1.1.6.		- the term of any wildlife approval is limited to 10 years; or - if the Panel is of a mind to grant an approval for 50 years, a review and re-certification condition is imposed; and	The Applicant requests 15 years to align with indicative Stages 1 & 2.
1.1.7.		the LMP is amended to require mouse control as part of pest control measures; and	The Applicant does not consider mouse control to be commensurate with this activity. The Applicant refer to the substantial survey effort and coverage over 2020 and 2021. Only 5 copper skinks were recorded from these surveys, and lizard habitat is considered to be highly degraded. The Project has been assessed as having a low-level effect on native lizard values, given consideration to the degraded condition of the forest fragments and low encounter rates of copper skinks as per the outcome of surveys. Further, copper skinks are regularly encountered in newly revegetated environments, and including rough grasses on roadside berms and urban gardens. On this basis, application of mouse control to the 108 ha of proposed enhancement (and lizard receptor site) is not considered commensurate with the effect. The Applicant could consider localised mouse control as a trigger for unexpected / higher values. In the DOC email dated 29 September 2025. DOC indicated that it would be happy to discuss the details of these requirements if the Applicant was able to provide more information about what might be proposed and where in the site (e.g for a mouse control trigger). A copy of the email confirming DOC's position is

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			saved to the Sharefile as <i>Wildlife Approval – DOC confirmation email dated 29 September 2025</i>. The Applicant considers that mouse control (being a denser spacing (20 m) of pest bait stations along the 20 m wide lizard release buffer area as mapped in Figure 7 of the updated EMP (17 July 2025)) could be triggered by: - Relocation of > 40 lizards in total - Relocation of >10 pacific gecko - Relocation of any species not covered by the Wildlife Approval
1.1.8.		• the LMP is amended to increase the number of eco-stacks currently proposed by the applicant in the LMP; and • the LMP is amended to require the staging of eco-stacks by constructing them on the release site several months earlier than currently proposed.	The Applicant agrees to amend this. The Applicant notes that the general ecostack, as depicted in Figure 8 of document E3:9 (17 July 2025 - and updated to incorporate previous DOC feedback) is expected to support several individual skinks or terrestrial geckos. While the number of ecostacks is intended to be triggered by the number of lizards salvaged, it is recommended that a minimum of three ecostacks are prepared at receptor sites ahead of each indicative stage of the Project, and a further ecostack (minimum 1m x 1m pile of stacked logs, brush and rocks) be prepared for every five lizards located thereafter.
1.1.9.	Section 6.3: The role of species management plans	DOC's preference was that all of the information outlining methods and mitigations associated with the wildlife approval were contained within the LMP, however, some information about the release site enhancement remains in a separate document – Net Gain Delivery: Pest and Weed Control E7:9, referred to within the LMP. While DOC understands that the relevant information in these wider documents is also replicated within the LMP it is recommended that either the conditions are amended to capture all reference in the various documents relevant to lizard management, or the supporting documents and management plans are updated to ensure there are no future conflicts between documents and the LMP stands alone with respect to lizard management. The applicant has proposed conditions regarding the LMP and the need for Auckland Council to certify it before any salvage begins. DOC has concerns with this approach as their role in relation to future amendments is unclear. Additionally, any changes to the LMP via certification by the council would not be a lawful variation of the wildlife approval and would undermine DOC's ongoing management of the approval. <u>To combat these issues, DOC has recommended changes to the proposed conditions that ensure the applicant must follow the LMP as well as all other areas of the EMP where lizards are referred to; and that any LMP amendments would require a variation through DOC.</u>	The Applicant agrees with DOC's concerns and can see how the currently drafted conditions could create duplication of approvals in respect to lizard management and lead to confusion around authorisation. The Applicant will amend the draft resource consent conditions to separate out lizard management, to ensure the applicant must follow the LMP as well as all other areas of the EMP where lizards are referred to. The Applicant also agrees that any amendments to the LMP should require a variation through DOC.
1.1.10.	Section 9: Treaty of Waitangi settlement considerations and obligations	DOC notified entities in Table 4 of its section 51 report that the application is progressing through the FTAA. DOC commenced initial engagement via email on 16 June 2025, inviting iwi to engage with DOC where they had concerns relevant to DOC's submission. Responses were received from Ngāti Paoa and Te Ākitai Waiohū, their respective issues and their concerns are summarised below. DOC has remained open to further feedback up until the time of writing: • Ngāti Paoa expressed an interest in engaging directly with the applicant, which they identified had not occurred at the time of writing. • Te Ākitai Waiohū expressed concerns about the removal of indigenous vegetation and habitat in Significant Ecological Areas (SEA), highlighting the impact on the cultural landscape and values. They relayed their view that buffer planting should be included in addition to mitigation measures, and that the application does not fully address expected and agreed outcomes for rehabilitation to remedy the significant impacts of quarrying on te taiao. Te Ākitai Waiohū seeks further engagement around principles and high-level outcomes for rehabilitation, and a condition of consent confirming that a Closure and Rehabilitation Management Plan (CRMP) will be developed in collaboration with and with approval of Te Ākitai Waiohū. This relates to the resource consent application which DOC expects to address in comments under section 53 of the Act. Te Ākitai Waiohū also held concerns for the proposed offset planting on Hingaia Island. DOC understands this site will no longer be used for offsetting.	The Applicant is committed to an ongoing partnership with mana whenua to ensure meaningful and enduring outcomes for te Taiao. The Applicant has engaged with Ngāti Paoa since receiving this feedback. The Applicant talked through all the engagement done to date, and directed Ngāti Paoa to the application and specifically the iwi engagement report and CVA's. No further correspondence has been received from Ngāti Paoa since June 2025. There are no proposed or known rehabilitation works for the Sutton Block pit. As noted, Condition 66(g) requires the Quarry Management Plan to be updated with closure and rehabilitation details within five years of closure being confirmed. In addition, Condition 7(a) provides for mana whenua to prepare a Cultural Management Plan in conjunction with SAL. This condition allows for the opportunity for mana whenua involvement in the future closure and rehabilitation planning for the site. In terms of the position outlined in the section 51 report on the Hingaia Island planting, the Applicant notes that Te Ākitai Waiohū has provided an updated position in its comments dated 23 September 2025. However, the Applicant agrees that the proposed planting on Ngā Motu o Hingaia is a worthy restoration and enhancement project. Unfortunately, the landowner (DOC) could not

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			provide landowner approval. The Applicant understood this was because Te Ākitai Waiohū (as part of the governance group for the islands) were reluctant to support the proposal and therefore it was removed from the restoration and enhancement package. If Te Ākitai Waiohū are now in a position whereby they support the inclusion of this area, this would be a change in advice from what the Applicant was advised. The Applicant is prepared to consider offering to still undertake this work, which would be above and beyond what is required as part of the offset package, but only if landowner approval is forthcoming within a set timeframe. A condition to this effect will be provided in the Applicant's draft condition set to be provided in due course.
	Appendix A: Marked up conditions (Pages 24-28)	Wildlife Act Approval	
1.1.11.		DOC has recommended edits to the proposed conditions with minor changes (to align them with standard wildlife approvals under the Wildlife Act). DOC is satisfied with the other proposed conditions. If both these conditions and the recommendations in section 3.5 of DoC's report are adopted, DOC would be satisfied that the approval would be in line with the purpose of the Wildlife Act and provide for the protection of absolutely protected wildlife.	Where the Applicant accepts the changes proposed by DOC to the draft Wildlife Approval, these amendments have been incorporated into the updated Wildlife Approval document which will be filed with the Applicant's 1 October 2025 response saved on the sharefile as <i>Wildlife Approval Conditions</i>. The updated Wildlife Approval document has been provided to DOC and it confirmed that it is satisfied with the conditions on 29 September 2025. A copy of the email confirming DOC's position is saved to the Sharefile as <i>Wildlife Approval – DOC confirmation email dated 29 September 2025</i>.
1.1.12.		DOC's preference is for a 10-year term for the wildlife approval. However, should the Panel be inclined to grant a 50-year term, an alternative set of conditions has been provided for consideration.	The Applicant confirms that it does not seek a 50-year duration period for the Wildlife Approval and instead seeks a 15-year period to align with the indicative Stages 1 and 2 for the Project. In response to DOC requests, the Applicant is willing to accept a condition requiring a review of the approval at the 10 year mark.
		Resource Consent Conditions	
1.1.13.		Certification of Management Plans Condition 11: While the Lizard Management Plan is not included in Table 1. The Ecological Management Plan (which contains the LMP) requires certification. Any management plans forming part of the consent should be approved by the Panel unless conditions provide clear and objective standards to be met for certification. DOC recommends this condition be amended to exclude the LMP or that the supporting documents are updated to ensure no future conflicts between documents. DOC recommends the LMP require certification by the Director-General.	The Applicant supports this. Changes will be made to the draft resource consent conditions to be provided to the Panel in due course.
1.1.14.		Lizard Management Plan Condition: Amendment. The objective of the LMP is as set out in 5.1.1 [LMP – date]. Stevenson Aggregates Limited will comply with the Lizard Management Plan (LMP) and all other parts of the EMP where lizards are referred to [add date of latest revision] that is annexed to this Approval.	The Applicant supports this. Changes will be made to the draft resource consent conditions to be provided to the Panel in due course.
	Appendix A (Pages 29-31)	Alternative condition set for a 10-year term:	
		Wildlife Act Authority Conditions	
1.1.15.		Schedule 2 – Standard Conditions 4.1: DOC's preference is for a 10 year term.	The Applicant requests a 15-year Wildlife Approval on the basis that this aligns with indicative Stages 1 and 2.
1.1.16.		Review and re-certification conditions proposed	The Applicant understands that a 10 year period for Wildlife Approvals is the standard duration period that DOC grants. However, the Applicant seeks a 15-

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		Stevenson Aggregates Limited must review the LMP and resubmit it to the Director-General for certification on or before each date that is 10 years, 20 years, 30 years and 40 years from the Approval date.	year period to align with indicative Stages 1 and 2. To address DOC's concerns, the Applicant proposes a review at the 10-year stage.
1.1.17.		The purpose of the review is to reassess habitat conditions and characteristics and update the LMP to reflect current species knowledge, best practice lizard management and mitigation techniques.	The Applicant agrees to the inclusion of a review provision for the 15-year Wildlife Approval.
1.1.18.		Any proposed amendment to the LMP must: • be prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced person with expertise in lizards; • meet the objective set out in condition X.4; • include at a minimum the requirements set out in condition X.5; • be for the purpose set out in condition X.2; and • must be submitted to the local Operations Manager (auckland@doc.govt.nz) of the Department of Conservation, on behalf of the Director-General of Conservation, for certification that condition X.3(a)-(d) have been satisfied.	The Applicant agrees to this inclusion.
1.1.19.		The objective of the LMP (including any amendment) is as set out in 5.1.1 of [EMP (including date)]	
1.1.20.		The Director-General will certify an amendment to the LMP if it includes processes for the following, in a manner that will achieve the LMP objective and the purpose of the review: a) Credentials and contact details of the suitably qualified and experienced ecologist/herpetologist who will implement the plan; b) Timing of the implementation of the LMP; c) A description of methodology for survey, trapping and relocation of lizards rescued including but not limited to: - salvage protocols; - relocation protocols (including method used to identify suitable relocation site(s)); - nocturnal and diurnal capture protocols; - supervised habitat clearance/transfer protocols; - artificial cover object protocols; and - opportunistic relocation protocols; d) A description of the relocation site(s); including: - provision for additional refugia, if required e.g. depositing salvaged logs, wood or debris for newly released native skinks that have been rescued; - any protection mechanisms (if required) to ensure the relocation site is maintained (e.g.) covenants, consent notices etc; and - any weed and pest management to ensure the relocation site is maintained as appropriate habitat. e) Monitoring methods, including but not limited to: - baseline surveying within the site; - baseline surveys outside the site to identify potential release sites for salvaged lizard populations and lizard monitoring sites; - ongoing annual surveys to evaluate relocation success; - pre and post – relocation surveys; and - monitoring of effectiveness of pest control and/or any potential adverse effects on lizards associated with pest control; and f) A post-vegetation clearance search for remaining lizards	The following appears to be standardised wording, as much of this detail is provided- baseline surveys that will be completed inside and outside the site. However, the Applicant does not agree to the inclusion of 'ongoing' annual surveys. Our Plan identifies 5 years, triggered by 20+ lizards, which is considered to be more appropriate.
1.1.21.		If the Director-General decides not to recertify the LMP, the approval will be considered to be no longer supported by an adequate management plan and may be revoked.	