



Management of Pine Forests on Kawau Island Historic Reserve – Factsheet

April 2016

Background

The Department of Conservation (DOC) and a number of Kawau Island landowners have expressed concerns about the pine forest on the Kawau Island Historic Reserve. Public safety, protection of property, marine navigation hazards and landscape values are the key concerns.

Further, the current approach of dealing with resulting damage as trees fall is unsustainable, expensive and deals with the result of a problem rather than the problem itself. It also makes rehabilitation and management difficult because of the large volume of timber and slash left behind after trees fall.

DOC, in wanting to move towards safer and more sustainable management of the forests reviewed advice from technical specialists, carefully considered all issues, and determined that harvesting the trees was the most effective option.

DOC has contracted Jo Ritchie from *Treescape Environmental* to co-ordinate the project. Jo's role is to ensure all planning and legal requirements are met, including the development of plans, protection of historic sites, and consultation with affected parties.

Harvest Plan

A harvest plan and feasibility study has been prepared by commercial forestry consultancy company *PF Olsen*, in order to assess the commercial viability of a logging operation. Harvesting needs to be cost neutral/positive so that costs to DOC are minimised and income can be put into restoration.

The exotic pine forest within the Kawau Island Historic Reserve comprises an area of approximately 100 ha. Of this, approximately 90 ha has been identified as having commercial harvest potential. The area 'ear-marked' for commercial harvest includes:

- 10.1 ha of *Pinus pinaster*,
- 33.6 ha of *P. radiata* (old crop),
- 46.2 ha of *P. radiata* (regen).

The logs will be taken off the Island using a barge and pontoon system that will be temporarily established at Lady's Bay.

The remaining 10ha of the forest is made up of historic plantings (e.g. heritage landscape precinct around the Momona Point through Mansion House Valley to Two House Bay and Redwood Track area) and areas on the coastal frontage/escarpment. These areas have no commercial value but require some trees to be removed for safety reasons and to remove existing and future hazards around coastal erosion and navigation hazards with trees falling into the coastal/marine area.



An additional area to the west of Schoolhouse Bay identified by landowners as providing protection from prevailing winds will also be retained and strengthened by additional planting.

The bulk of the pine trees are thought to have naturalised from the original Governor Grey plantings undertaken in the 1860's. Heritage trees, including those that are likely the original parent trees planted by Governor Grey, have been recorded in plans and will not be logged. Their management will form part of the restoration plan.

Conditional on the approval of the authority to modify from Heritage New Zealand and resource consents from Auckland Council, the harvesting is scheduled to begin in early summer 2016 and run for 2-3 seasons

Post-Harvest Management and Restoration

A restoration plan has been prepared and provides a considered and proactive approach to managing remaining trees and re-establishing predominantly native forest cover in the logged areas. This will include selected replanting in coastal areas and in heritage areas such as Mansion House Valley and the Redwood Track. It will also include an animal and plant pest control to enable natural regeneration to act as the main means of re-establishing cover in the harvested areas.

This restoration programme will provide a safer environment for visitors and landowners and will also have benefits to the natural environment on the island. It will also allow for the significant cultural heritage landscape within the Historic Reserve to be maintained and enhanced.

Resources

At a minimum the harvest will need to be cost neutral, however log prices vary so the timing of harvest is critical. Any profit will be used to undertake animal and plant pest control, replanting of mainly native species with some exotics in heritage areas. It will also be used for mitigation works such as planting and interpretation around a number of cultural heritage sites.

The post-harvest restoration plan will include a realistic budget to cover this work.



Where to from here?

The following documents are completed or are in final draft stage:

- Visual and Landscape Assessment
- Pre-harvest Archaeological Assessment
- Long Term Site Management Archaeological Sites
- Coastal Tree Management Plan
- Restoration Plan
- Harvest Plan and Feasibility Studies
- Sediment and Erosion Control Plan

We are now working on the Authority to Modify for Heritage New Zealand and the Assessment of Environmental Effects and Resource Consent Application for Auckland Council and expect to have these lodged by mid May 2016. Auckland Council have advised that the consent application will be publicly notified so that they can gauge the level of support for the project and ensure that a transparent and objective process has been followed.

We have had meetings with the community in the past and have been encouraged by the level of support for the overall project. We have also established an iwi liaison group and have support in principle from them for the project. Consultation will be ongoing and we welcome any feedback you may have.

More information

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