

Western Springs Native Bush Restoration Project Update

5 April 2018

Dear resident,

In 2015 the Waitematā Local Board approved the Western Springs Native Bush Restoration Project to restore the forest area (bordered by West View Road, Auckland Zoo, Western Springs Lakeside and the Stadium), address the health and safety concerns posed by the aging pines and fulfil the objective of the Western Springs Lakeside Management Plan to return the area to native forest.

We apologise for the delays in providing this update on the Western Springs Native Bush Restoration Project. We have been thoroughly reviewing options as to how best to progress the project to ensure no trees are removed unnecessarily.

The board has received expert advice that for this work and overdue track maintenance to happen, the stand of about 200 pine trees will have to be removed. The pines are declining rapidly with regular branch and whole tree failures occurring despite regular maintenance and they are a risk to public safety.



A 2013 survey found 224 of the original 506 trees had died or fallen, reducing the stand to 282. A later survey, completed in 2016, found the live tree population had declined to about 200 after around 60 fell or snapped, and 20 unstable trees were felled.

Many of the pines are in poor health, with sparse crowns and dead or dying limbs, so that action is needed to maintain safety. Removing only dead or unstable trees would cause a dramatic increase in the failure rate among those left behind. As such, the track that leads through the

pines may have to be closed until removal can take place.

Subject to resource consent, Auckland Council will remove the pines and we will confirm the timing as soon as this is known.

The trees will be felled into selected zones to limit damage to undergrowth. These zones have been determined by ecologists, who have considered native species of value to protect.

About 70% of the wood will be removed or mulched, and the rest, mainly tree trunks, will be left for habitat for native fauna. About 20 totem poles will remain as habitat for kingfisher and morepork, and logs will be left on the ground as a habitat for the insects they eat.

A major planting and restoration effort – estimated at about 15,000 plants – will follow immediately, turning the area into a healthy podocarp-broadleaf forest dominated by kauri, puriri, taraire and tanekaha, along with a native understorey. The regeneration plans, and track proposals will be confirmed with input from the local community.

While various exotic and native birds inhabit the pines, the area is not an important habitat for white-faced herons, none were recorded during a 2016 survey. As a precautionary approach no felling will take place in the nesting season.

The project will take about three months, with felling about two months. Working hours will be limited to Monday to Friday 7am-5pm.

The removal methodology has been reviewed and verified by an independent party. A copy of that report is available on request. If you have any further questions, please email westernsprings@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Further updates will be available on the council website and on the local board facebook page. Residents will receive a notification prior to the pine removal and any track closure.



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Chair



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