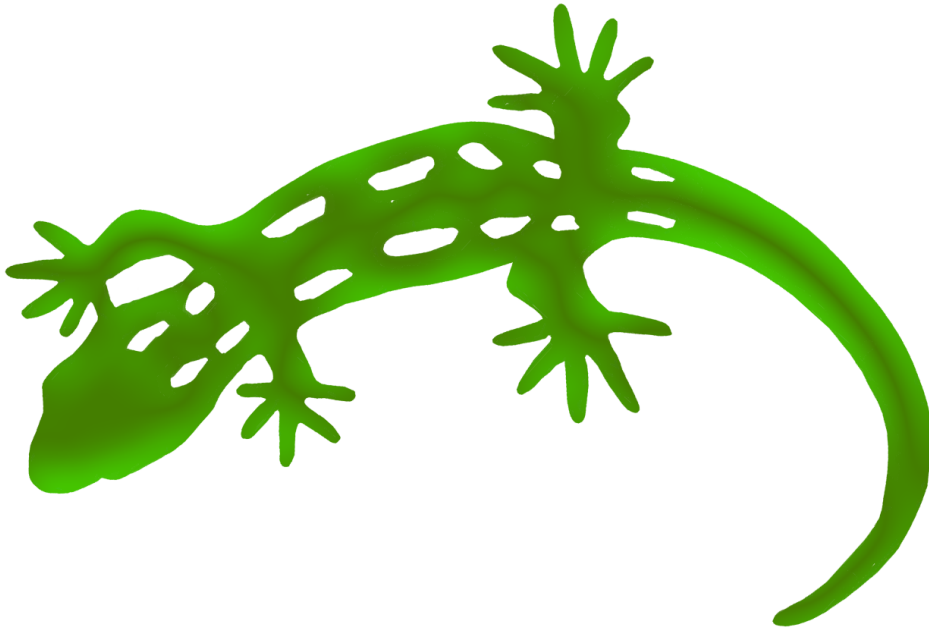


MANAGEMENT PLAN

Friends of Okura Bush

June 2017



Management Plan for the on-going Protection & Health of Okura Bush Scenic Reserve and Environs

Written by Beverley Short, Lezette Reid, Jonathan Baskett

Approved and Accepted by the FOOB Executive: June 2017

Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
2. INTRODUCTION
 - Area Description
 - Friends of Okura Bush
 - Purpose of the Management Plan
 - Further Details
3. MAP of the AREA
4. THE MANAGEMENT PLAN
 - Threats
 - Goals
 - Action Plan
 - Priorities
 - Evaluation
5. LEGAL ISSUES
6. Acknowledgements

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The Okura Bush Scenic Reserve is a 116 hectare stand of established broadleaf and kauri forest on the northern edge of North Shore, Auckland**
- **The ecosystem of Okura Bush and the associated Karepiro beach have been significantly threatened by pests, as have kauri trees by PTA (kauri dieback disease) spread by walkers and animals.**
- **Friends of Okura Bush (FOOB), an incorporated voluntary society established in 2014, is dedicated to the survival of the forest. See our website at okurabush.org.nz.**
- **Our partners include the three local iwi, the Auckland Council and the Department of Conservation.**
- **Fifty or more volunteers for FOOB are involved in governance, trapping, weeding, bird and lizard monitoring, the newsletter and fundraising.**
- **This Management Plan includes work to monitor the forest and its environs to best practice standards, protecting kauri by contributing funds and boardwalks, maintaining and expanding our vigorous trapping, weeding, planting and monitoring programs, and fundraising to help finance these objectives.**
- **Evaluation of success includes monitoring the health of the trees together with bird, lizard and fish numbers, keeping accurate accounts of pests trapped and of weeds removed.**
- **Our long term goal is to restore the forest, as far as possible, to its pre European status.**

INTRODUCTION

AREA DESCRIPTION: The Okura Bush Scenic Reserve is one of the last stands of established coastal broadleaf and kauri forest in Auckland. It has, to the southern boundary a coastal estuary, on its eastern side the protected Long Bay/Okura Marine reserve and a heritage site on Karepiro Beach: Dacre Cottage. Other boundaries include to the north and west, privately owned farmland, bush and pine forest. The latter was felled in recent years and has remained untended since then, with a new forest of wilding pines, gorse and weeds growing amongst the abandoned scrap timber and stumps on the hillsides and in the creeks. Okura Bush is recognised for the history of both Maori and

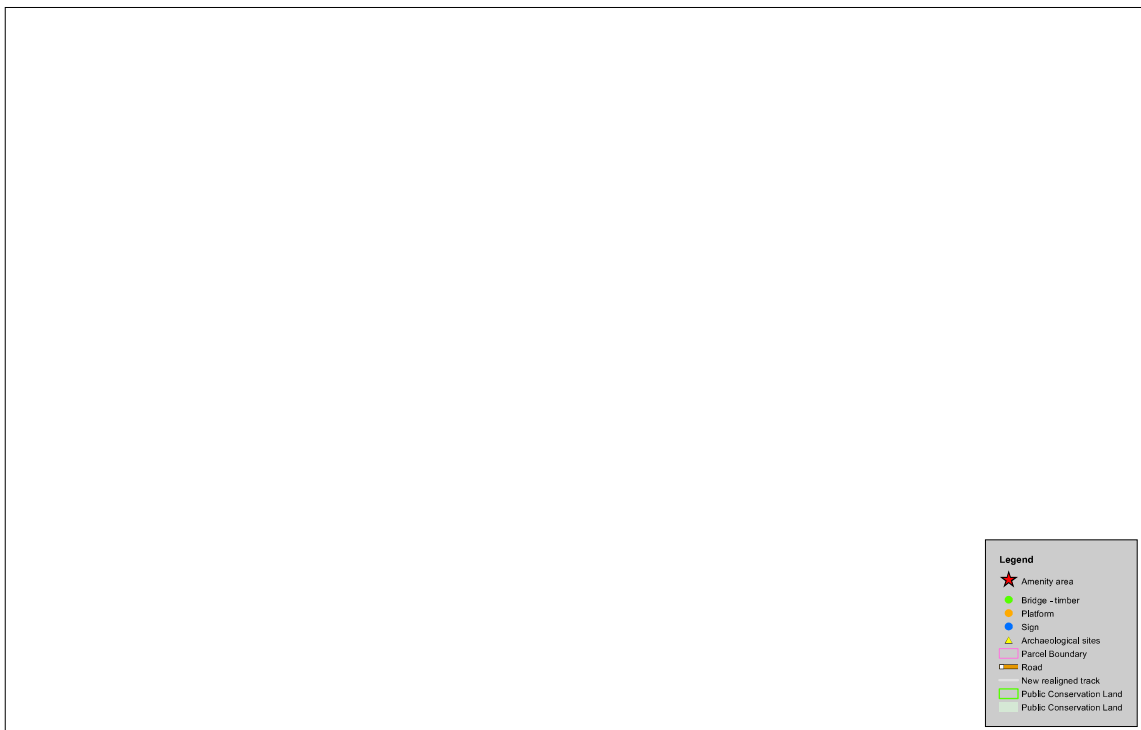
European influence. There are significant archaeological and historical sites, native fauna and flora, including pre-European kauri. (See our website).

FRIENDS OF OKURA BUSH: Friends of Okura Bush (FOOB) is a Registered Voluntary Society consisting of an Executive Committee and subcommittees: Trapping, Fundraising, Weeding, Bird Monitoring, and Forest Festival. Progress and work are reported on our website: okurabush.org.nz

PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN: The Friends of Okura Bush Management Plan is a formal planning document developed by members of the Society, with guidance from our various partners. These include the three Iwi with historical connections to the area, (Te Kawerau a Maki, Ngati Manuhiri and Ngati Whatua o Kaipara), the Department of Conservation (DOC), the Auckland Council (primarily the Local Board), and various affiliated community bodies in the Okura area. This management plan is a reference document to use as a basis of understanding the values and aims of FOOB. It is not an alternative to consultation, involvement or face-to-face contact with the Society. It is a “Living Document” to be reviewed and updated regularly.

GENERAL DETAILS: A more extensive account of the background of FOOB and its predecessor the East Coast Bays Coastal Protection Society, the Maori and European history of the area, the impact of the Treaty of Waitangi, specific Taonga (birds, plants, native lizard and fish, insects, snails, fungi, and archaeological sites), and legislative issues are *posted on our website okurabush.co.nz under “The Okura Bush and Environs: a taonga to protect and preserve”*.

Map



Legend

- ★ Amenity area
- Bridge – timber
- Platform
- Sign
- ▲ Archaeological sites
- Parcel Boundary
- Road
- New realigned track
- Public Conservation Land
- Public Conservation Land

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai
New Zealand Government

Okura Bush Scenic Reserve

0 50 100 200 300 Metres

Auckland Conservancy Drawn 9/8/2013

THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

THREATS

- Decimation of the forest ecosystem by possums, rats, mice, mustelids (stoats and weasels), feral cats and hedgehogs. Damage includes to native plants including kauri, birds, insects, lizard, native fish
- Decimation to shore waders and birds (particularly dotterels, oystercatchers, stilts, terns, godwits) from the above plus foot traffic, horses and dogs.
- Spread of kauri root disease or Phytophthora Taxon Agathis (PTA). PTA is already present in the Okura Bush largely spread in contaminated soil on the boots of about 70,000 (DOC est.) walkers and runners who use this recreational facility every year.
- Contamination of streams and run off into the ocean from nearby housing development schemes and managed fill.
- The introduction and spread of weeds, some of which are on the top ten most noxious in New Zealand.
- Stress to tree roots from high visitor numbers and substandard maintenance and walkway development on the track.

GOALS

To work with our partners to:

- Restore flora and fauna / mauri to the bush and estuary, to the best of our ability, back to the species diversity and abundance levels to its most original form. This will include working to dispel the belief that 'collateral damage' is a necessary part of urban development.
- Keep to the forefront of management decisions, the spiritual connection iwi (Te Kawerau o Maki, Ngati Manuhiri and Ngati Whatua o Kaipara) has to the Okura Bush and Estuary.
- Invite the local community to volunteer in our various programs; trapping, weeding, planting, water, bird and lizard monitoring, and protection of kauri from PTA (kauri dieback disease).
- To build boardwalks over areas of walkway where sensitive trees are present to protect them from root stress and disease or Phytophthora Taxon Agathis (PTA). Boardwalks are the recognised 'gold standard' for elevating foot traffic pressures on the forest floor by DOC and other experts. Other cheaper options to are either impractical, ineffective, unproven, and/or detrimental to the health of the forest ecosystem. In total it is estimated that the minimum sections of boardwalk required to protect sensitive areas amount to 1600m in total.
- Work closely with other community organisations in the vicinity that have similar aims.
- Raise our own funds and therefore qualify for outside funding to complete FOOB's short term and long term goals.
- To create a buffer zone on the Okura Village side of the forest for weeds and predating animals .

ACTION PLAN

- Work closely with our partners to understand all points of view, agree on priorities, respect cultural issues, and resolve differences of opinion.
- Assist with, or undertake, scoping of the health of the forest and the extent of kauri die back disease, and to monitor recovery of native birds, reptiles, insects and fish.
- Continue and expand our trapping program for rats, mice, possums, stoats, weasels and feral cats and document results.
- Raise money for a series of boardwalks to protect sensitive trees like taraire and kauri from the boots of walkers and runners.
- Work in conjunction with the North West Wildlink initiative and landholders to achieve a strong buffer zone.
- Continue to scope the extent of weeds within the forest and its flight path and raise money to remove them.
- Continue to raise public awareness of the above issues through local events (e.g. our 'Okura Forest Festival' and the 'Great Rat Knockdown Competition', our newsletters, social media, website, track notice boards and media releases.
- To observe prescribed Health and Safety regulations in achieving the above objectives.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

TASK	TO JULY 2017	NEXT STEP
Scoping	Independent review FOOB reviews DOC assessment	Await DOC approval for further boardwalks and new tracks
Pest Control	8 lines operating with one closed due to development activities on Weiti station. Two full years of trapping achieved and on website. Trap updates commenced with KaMate traps installed on three lines. 16 volunteers involved.	Add more lines Update traps Funds Continue to recruit volunteers
Weed Control	Monthly volunteer teams, financial assistance from Local Council to bring in contractors	Continue as funds allow
Planting	1000 trees planted Stillwater end of main walkway	More trees as funds allow
Boardwalks	300m+ new boardwalks installed buy DOC during 2016	Fundraising to build remainder required
Bird Monitoring	No pre trapping data October 2015 and 2016 results on website	Next monitoring October 2017, training in September
Lizard program	Funds and equipment approved, expert volunteer	Report due end of 2017

	involved	
Track Information	Notice boards at each end	Pamphlets Tree I.D. signs Funds required
Public ownership and information	Accessible website Notice boards at track entries Media exposure Increasing membership Regular offers to help	Build membership and public involvement Complete data collection info and continue Nurture and acknowledge our partnerships
Fundraising	Almost \$50,000 raised from donations, Council, funding bodies.	Continue, acknowledge and expand funding sources.

PRIORITIES

- Work to protect kauri from PTA by insisting on the installation of boardwalks to protect sensitive roots from the boots of walkers and runners. Boardwalks are recognised by DOC and other experts as the 'gold standard' for the protection of kauri. Public education and boot cleaning stations are to continue.
- Expand and update our trapping lines.
- Expand our weed control and planting programs.
- Fundraising.

RESOURCES

- Independent assessments on the health of the forest (2016)
- An aggressive Fundraising Sub Committee.
- A pool of dedicated volunteers in governance (Executive Committee), trapping, weeding, fundraising and other activities.
- Sufficient money (July 2016) to expand trap lines and for weeding contracts.
- The advice and experience of our partners, particularly iwi, Council and DOC.
- A significant pool of expertise in our membership and supporters.

PLAN EVALUATION

FOOB will monitor the effect of its Management Plan by:

- Continuing to monitor the health of the forest by recognised experts (when necessary), through the work of DOC, and by our own informed volunteers.
- Insisting on recognised best practice management of threats within the forest and by doing our best to raise funds to assist the efforts of an underfunded DOC Northern Region. The urgent need to install boardwalks is an obvious example.
- Careful monitoring of pest catches and liaison with the University of Auckland Department of Statistics through their 'CatchIT' program.

- Assessment of remaining predators in the forest with tracking tunnels and infra red cameras.
- Annual monthly bird counts.
- Expert assessments of the health of the forest.
- Receiving feedback from walkers: for instance many comment on the return of birds evident in the forest.
- From our reptile monitoring program.
- Follow up on our weeding program.

LEGAL ISSUES

The Okura Bush and environs is administered by two Crown institutions – the Department of Conservation and the Auckland Council. Adjoining land is privately owned, and is included here because management of it impacts directly on the Okura Bush.

Friends of Okura Bush work in partnership with DoC for the part of the Bush that is administered by that Department; and in partnership with Auckland Council (in first instance the Local Board) for the part of the Bush that is administered by Council. Constraints and legal requirements are listed in:

The Reserves Act 1977

Conservation Act 1987

Local Government Act 2002

Each of these acts refers to obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi.

Friends of Okura Bush work in partnership with the three Iwi whose Treaty Settlements encompass various (sometimes overlapping) rohe (tribal domains) including the Okura Bush and Estuary (Karepiro). Historical linkages and Kaitiakitanga (guardianship), both of which surpass issues of ownership and access, of Te Kawerau a Maki, Ngati Whatua o Kaipara and Ngati Manuhiri, are recognised and respected by Friends of Okura Bush. FOOB is committed to and follows the principles laid out in the **Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975**

Further legal guidelines are found in:

The Resource Management Act 1991

The Bio-security Act 1993

In implementing our Management Plan FOOB undertakes to work within the requirements of all legal constraints, and to continue to consult and seek the advice of other organisations and groups committed to the health and Biosecurity of the Okura Bush Scenic Reserve, Karepiro Bay, and environs.

Acknowledgements:

The writers of this Management Plan were directed to certain existing documents to guide and inform in the preparation of this Management Plan and the document *“The Okura Bush and Environs: a taonga to protect and preserve”*.

Material from the following documents has been abridged, or used to inform and inspire the content of this Management Plan.

The writers of the original documents are hereby acknowledged:

Ngati Whatua Orakei Iwi Management Plan, 2012

Te Kawerau a Maki and the Trustees of the Te Kawerau Iwi Settlement Trust and the Crown – Deed of Settlement of Historical Claims, 22 February 2014

Te Kawerau a Maki Trust Resource Management Plan Statement 1995

Ngati Whatua O Kaipara and The Crown – Deed of Settlement of Historical Claims, 9 September 2011

Ngati Manuhiri and the Trustees of the Ngati Manuhiri Settlement Trust and the Crown – Deed of Settlement of Historical Claims, on or around 1 December 2012.

The writers of the 2014 Friends of Okura Bush Ecological management plan.