

SUBMISSION TO RODNEY COUNTY COUNCILDRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN: PARRY KAURI PARK

A small party of Auckland Botanical Society members, including a number who live in the Warkworth area, visited the Parry Kauri Park in the company of Dr L.B. Moore, a local resident with a special interest in the reserve and a long-standing member of our Society. We understand that Dr Moore will be making her own views known to you.

1. Introduction

We were generally impressed with the reserve: there is an impressive diversity of species, and apart from some areas of heavy use where trampling impedes the growth of seedlings, the reserve appears to be in good condition. Active "management" would in the main appear to be unnecessary except in the specific areas discussed below. In particular, we urge the Council to avoid any planting within the reserve. While it is obvious that it would be inappropriate to plant any introduced species it is perhaps less obvious that planting natives is also inappropriate. If the species is not native to the reserve it would introduce an alien element; if the species is found in the reserve introduction from another seed source will alter the gene pool and reduce the Reserve's scientific value. The areas where undergrowth is conspicuously absent are either natural (for example, beneath taraire), or caused by trampling of seedlings before they have a chance to become established. In the former case, no action is necessary or desirable; in the latter regeneration will occur naturally if visitors can be encouraged to keep to well-defined paths.

2. Fences

It is vital that fences be regularly checked and maintained to keep stock out of the reserve.

3. Weeds

Privet (Ligustrum species) would appear to be the weed with the greatest nuisance potential at the moment. It is an aggressive weed and should be eliminated. One vigorous shrub was noticed outside the fenced area near the derelict toilet; others are undoubtedly present. Gorse is present but is less of a long-term problem and will eventually be suppressed naturally by the native species. Other aggressive weeds which should be watched for are Japanese honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica) and wandering jew (Tradescantia fluminensis). These are both extremely destructive and immediate action must be taken if they should appear, before they have a chance to become well-established. Wandering jew smothers the undergrowth, inhibits the growth of seedlings and interferes with regeneration of the forest. The devastating effects

it can have may be seen in the Kowhai Reserve in Warkworth.

4. Noxious animals

If possums are not already established in the reserve, it can be safely assumed that they will become established at some time in the future. The management plan should make provision for possum control should this become necessary.

5. Tracks

It is important for a number of reasons that visitors keep strictly to the paths. Trampling of young seedlings prevents regeneration as can be clearly seen by anyone standing at the entry gate. To the right, where visitors rarely venture, the undergrowth is conspicuous and healthy. To the left, where children especially are likely to leave the path to play, the undergrowth is sparse. In addition, there are a number of species of native ground orchids which form quite extensive colonies close to the tracks throughout the reserve, and these should be protected from trampling feet. We suggest that signs be erected at each entry, asking visitors for their co-operation in keeping to the tracks, and explaining why this is necessary. It is our experience that the more well-defined the path, the more likely it is that people will not step off it, and this is especially important at the start of the track as the visitor enters the reserve.

In some places the direction of the track is not particularly clear. Unless the track itself is upgraded to the extent that markers become unnecessary, we favour the use of painted marker pegs, rather than discs nailed onto trees.

We also recommend that the edges of the track are clearly defined, for example by using tanalised pine, or tree fern trunks if a "legitimate" source is available. Culverts should be built in the muddy spots and some kind of solid surface laid. If metal is used, care should be taken that noxious weeds are not introduced with the metal. Steps on steep portions will prevent people wandering off the track grasping for handholds. Under no circumstances should any tree roots bigger than about one inch in diameter be cut or damaged. Where roots occur in the path, metal should be built up over them for protection, or the path rerouted.

Track maintenance is, unfortunately, an ongoing task and some form of regular schedule, probably at weekly intervals especially in summer, will be needed.

6. Conclusion

We believe the reserve is an extremely valuable local asset which is a most appropriate complement to the Museum and the kauris. The Council is most fortunate in having the Reserve, despite the responsibility that this entails.

(Dr) R.E. Beever, President

Sandra Jones, Secretary

9 December 1983