

Maea Petherick

From:
Subject:

From: Mace Ward
Sent: Thursday, 22 November 2018 5:47 PM
To: Waitakere Ranges Local Board; Environment and Community Committee
Subject: RE: Update on Waitākere Ranges and Kauri Dieback

Kia ora e Sandra

The response to re-open Kitekite Track, among others, is consistent with the Council's public engagement earlier this year and our ongoing engagement with Te Kawerau ā Maki to re-open tracks.

In February 2018 the Environment and Community Committee proposed to '*close the forested areas of the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park, with exceptions, by 1 May 2018*' subject to working with Te Kawerau ā Maki, consultation with the Waitākere Ranges Local Board and targeted engagement with groups who use and benefit from the regional park.

As this was a significant decision for Aucklanders a public engagement process was undertaken, using a range of channels, and over 800 pieces of feedback on the Waitākere proposal. This was reported on at the Committee on 10 April 2018 – refer link to the Agenda/Report below.

"In summary, respondents expressed despair over the potential impact of the disease on kauri and the ranges. Approximately 24 per cent of submitters felt that the proposal was about right and 25 per cent thought it did not propose enough closures, suggesting that more track closures were needed to either support the principle of the rāhui or do the right thing.

Conversely 43 per cent of respondents felt there are too many track closures proposed and that the impact on the community would be too severe. Many mentioned specific tracks they would like to stay open. Feedback also suggested a lack of understanding about the science and the need to invest more into research and development, public education, cleaning stations and increasing knowledge about the disease."

Visitor monitoring shows that over 160,000 visitors entered the regional park at Kitekite tracks in 2017/18. The prioritisation of this track is in response to the popularity of the destination, public demand to visit the Waitakere parklands and ensuring that there is a proactive approach taken to managing the risk of disease spread.

An update on the work we have been doing to prioritise track re-opening was recently presented to and discussed with the Waitākere Ranges Local Board.

Finally, in terms of the flood risk – this is something we manage across our natural environments and use the New Zealand standard for assessing and managing water safety and risks of sudden rises in stream levels.

The track re-opening plan is complemented by an awareness programme, including by our Rangers and Kauri Dieback Ambassadors.

Nga mihi nui
Mace

Mace Ward
General Manager
Parks, Sports & Recreation | Community Services

Appendix 1

Resolution number ENV/2018/44 (April 2018)

MOVED by Deputy Chairperson A Filipaina, seconded by Deputy Mayor BC Cashmore:

That the Environment and Community Committee:

a) approve the track closure proposals in the Hunua Ranges Regional Park to prevent the introduction of Kauri Dieback disease in the park, by 1 May 2018 as detailed in Attachments B and C of the agenda report.

b) approve the proposal to close the forested areas of the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park with exceptions (such as beaches, pasturelands and a limited number of tracks with track surface conditions to a standard that will support the requirements of the proposed controlled area notice), by 1 May 2018 as detailed in Attachments D and E of the agenda report.

c) subject to b) direct staff to work with Te Kawerau ā Maki and jointly agree any further potential openings in the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park (that is tracks marked with an asterisk in Attachment E of the agenda report). Noting that this will occur through planned site visits and will be based on meeting controlled area notice requirements.

d) direct staff to prioritise initial track upgrades and improvements in the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park to re-establish coastal connectivity and multiday walking opportunities, as suggested during feedback, to mitigate the impact on park users and operators.

e) direct staff to work with mana whenua on kauri dieback management and wider regional parks matters of significance to mana whenua.

f) direct staff to work with relevant local boards on implementation of these recommendations.

g) note that there are significant technical risks relating to the understanding of kauri dieback disease and the impact the proposed closure approaches may have, and request staff to report back on the effectiveness of the closures, controlled area notices and additional measures within one year of commencement.

h) note that expenditure associated with the recommended approach to manage kauri dieback is not budgeted for in 2017/18 and recommend that Finance and Performance Committee approve unbudgeted expenditure up to a maximum of \$740,000 in 2017/2018.

i) note that staff required to implement the recommended approach to manage kauri dieback are additional to current approved staff numbers and approve an increase in 2 full time equivalents to deliver on this activity.

j) note the regional update on kauri dieback spread, management approaches, as well as the proposed Long-term Plan environmental protection options provide for this challenge.

k) note that if either of the proposed Long-term Plan environmental protection options are adopted that any additional expenditure to give effect to these closures from 2018/2019 onwards will need to be prioritised. This will need to be prioritised above previously planned activities for kauri dieback work such as: track improvements, upgrades, landowner support, hygiene station upgrades and washdown facilities.

l) note that the status and continuance of the closures, and council's management strategy, may be considered when the Regional Parks Management Plan 2010 comes up for review in 2020, or when the proposed National Pest Management Plan is developed, without limiting any other review.

CARRIED

Note: Pursuant to Standing Order 1.8.6 the following councillors requested that their dissenting votes be recorded, as follows:

· Cr M Lee against clause c)

- Cr W Walker against clause b)
- Cr J Watson against clause b)

Link to full Agenda Item

http://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2018/04/ENV_20180410_AGN_6838_AT.PDF

Mace Ward

General Manager

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