

Support for the Project Kakariki

From: Trustees of the Friends of Queen Elizabeth Regional Park (Kapiti) Trust

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Dear Minister of Conservation

Introduction

The Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park (QEP) have an interest in natural landscapes connected to, or in the vicinity of, Queen Elizabeth Park. We are supportive of the request to you to transfer the land identified in Project Kakariki to the Department of Conservation.

Ecological reason for support

In ecology, small disconnected areas of natural land are of limited value whereas large connected areas have a much greater diversity of landscapes, a larger number of natural processes and produce cleaner water etc, more suited to native flora and fauna. Queen Elizabeth Park is small in ecological terms and does not have enough high-value natural land to be significant in ecological terms. The Friends of QEP, however, wish to see the park's natural values increase. This can be achieved only by being ecologically connected to other nearby natural areas. They would contribute to our biodiversity and we would increase their diversity by contributing our unique features. Those features are our wetlands, our inland dunes, our coastal dunes, stream connections and land connection to beaches and the sea.

A Kapiti Coast park

QEP is strategically placed. To the north is the Raumati escarpment, zoned open space and connected across SH1 to QEP. To the east is Whareroa Farm (DoC), connected across SH1 to QEP and more or less connected to the Akatarawas (Greater Wellington Regional Council) and Tararuas (DoC). To the south is the Paekakariki escarpment (covenanted land) not connected.

The land identified in Project Kakariki to be transferred to the Department of Conservation would provide a connection to the Paekakariki escarpment and, via the plantings on each side of the Transmission Gully expressway, to Mt Wainui – part of the Akatarawa Forest. Together this would make a very large “sea to sky” park on the Kapiti Coast. It would allow these large,

variable quality, protected lands to be interconnected both ecologically and via walking/cycle tracks. Once connected, this combined area of protected land would contain many different ecosystems allowing native fauna to migrate between them as circumstances changed.

The logical centre of this park complex would be the newly constructed Ramaroa hall and ranger station at Queen Elizabeth Park.

Direct benefits

There are more direct benefits to the park. The catchments of Wainui Stream, the parks cleanest stream that has the most diverse native fish species, would be protected, would revegetate further improving this accessible stream.

The south eastern boundary of the park is on the steep side of an inland dune system. It would logically be shifted onto less steep ground where walking/cycling access to the inland tracks of QEP would be possible.

Project Kakariki identifies land unsuited to other purposes

From our knowledge of the areas within the land requested in Project Kakariki, it contains areas of significant ecological value and land that is more suited to recreational and ecological use and to carbon-sink purposes.

Please contact the writer if required.

Russell Bell

Chair Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park