

4. RETURN OF PART OF CLEARED FORESTRY LICENCE AREA FROM SELWYN PLANTATION BOARD

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The purpose of this report is to gain Council's approval to give notice to Selwyn Plantation Board of the Council's intention to regain approximately 8.313 ha of the forestry licence area in accordance with the requirements of Section 3 of the Forestry Licence between the Christchurch City Council, being the lessor, Selwyn Plantation Board Ltd being the licensee.

CONTEXT OF REPORT

The area (see attached plan) that the Council wishes to regain out of the present forestry licensed area has recently been felled, and therefore can be regained without compensation payable to the Selwyn Plantation Board Ltd, as would have been the case if trees were growing upon the area.

The radiata pine tree crop has a 30 year rotational cycle (growing cycle). It is necessary therefore for the Council to plan 30 years ahead with the development of Bottle Lake Forest Park in accordance with the Bottle Lake Forest Park Management Plan, which was completed in 1999, to ensure the plan is implemented, without the need to pay Selwyn Plantation Board Ltd compensation for trees that are removed before they reach maturity.

It is necessary for budget appropriation to have been made before regaining these areas to ensure that the areas can be cleared, and maintained to a reasonable standard to ensure that they do not become a fire hazard to the adjacent plantation.

When preparing this report officers were mindful of the limited budgets available for the development of Bottle Lake Forest Park over the next five years, and the necessity to retain tight control over budget expenditure over the next five years. The endorsement of the officer's recommendation will have a two pronged effect on Council's budgets. The first effect will be that it will reduce the area of land available to Selwyn Plantation Board Ltd of which the Council is a minority shareholder (39%), which they are able to grow trees upon, thereby reducing the financial return to Council over time. The second effect on Council budgets will be that budgets will be required to develop and maintain these areas.

RELEVANT CURRENT POLICY

The areas that it is proposed to take out of the Forest Licensed Area are a small proportion of the total area identified for development in the Bottle Lake Forest Park Management Plan known as the Park Headquarters Area. The park headquarters area is the most intensive development area planned for the park. A series of picnic areas will each have a distinctive vegetative theme. Development of visitor services in this area will have an effect on the use of the forest which in turn will influence further complementary developments in the park headquarters area.

As required by Section 3 of the Licence, officers of the Christchurch City Council and Selwyn Plantation Board Ltd have met to determine the area of the cleared land that will be required by the Christchurch City Council over the next growing cycle, (3.2(d)). The Council must give notice to the Selwyn Plantation Board Ltd on or before 30th June in each year during the continuance of the licence that the Council wish to resume control of the above mentioned licence area, hence the reason for this report.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

The two areas that officers are recommending that the Council resume control of and take out of the licence area are described below:

1. The first area is approximately 3.942 ha in size situated to the south of the new visitors centre at the Bottle Lake Forest Park entrance as outlined on the attached plan. Activities in this area will be enhanced by the new visitor information centre in a themed forest setting. The proposed arboretum will add to the current forest experience and be of both recreational and educational value and, together with proposed picnic areas, will complement the more physical activities associated with the forest tracks. Development of this area will also provide for some much needed gathering areas for forest based events.

2. The second area of approximately 4.371 ha is located behind the properties bounding the east of Waitikiri Drive, having frontage onto the Landfill Road (private road) and Waitikiri Drive to the north of the properties. The area is designated as a Picnic Area in the Management Plan in forest setting, being noted in section 10.2 of the plan which is entitled "Park Headquarters Development". This area is also the site of a proposed new roading pattern and entrance to the park as indicated in the plan. Entrance and roading patterns are yet to be designed in detail but it is necessary to acquire the land now between forestry rotations to avoid paying compensation costs by acquiring the land at a later date.. There is also a need to widen the firebreak between residential adjacent to Waitikiri Drive and the plantation area.

Committee members will note that at the time of the management plan's preparation it was proposed that a sports park be provided south of Bottle Lake Plantation upon the former Burwood Hospital land once the block subdivision of this area was complete. This will now not go ahead, the reason being that the reserve contribution was taken to extend the green edge corridor from Travis Wetland Park through to Bottle Lake Forest Park. There has been some suggestion that a sports field may be able to be accommodated between the Waitikiri Drive residential area and the proposed new road entry into the park. If this proposal is promoted some time in the future, it will be necessary for further public consultation to be undertaken as it differs substantially from the landscape proposal plan promoted in the 1999 management plan.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Finance is available in the current year's budget to undertake the clearance of the areas it is proposed to regain from the Selwyn Plantation Board Ltd licence area. Budget appropriation will need to be made in future years for the development of these areas, however once the areas are cleared they will be able to be maintained in a non fire hazardous state until further detailed planning can be undertaken, and budget appropriation made.

The Burwood/Pegasus Community Board have considered this issue and have recommended that the removal of the land from the license area proceed (May 2002 Council Agenda).

(Note: Councillor Chrissie Williams declared a conflict of interest in respect to this item and temporarily retired from the meeting.)

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council give notice to the Selwyn Plantation Board Ltd that it wishes to retain 8.313 ha of the forestry licence area as denoted on the attached plan.
 2. That Selwyn Plantation Board Ltd be notified by 30 June 2002 that the Council wishes to regain this area.