

News update 29th July 2024

Archaeological Authority Required for South Bay Forest Harvest

An archaeological and cultural inspection of the South Bay Forest area undertaken in preparation for the proposed harvesting of the forest has indicated the potential presence of multiple archaeological and cultural sites in that area and that an Archaeological Authority will probably need to be obtained from Heritage New Zealand before the harvesting operation can occur.

This was unexpected as it was believed that the extent of ground disturbance caused by the harvesting activities would be very limited and information held by Council in its District Plan does not reflect the potential extent of sites.

The harvesting of the South Bay Forest is also not a new activity – this will be the third rotation of a plantation forest on that site – and the tracks and operational areas proposed to be used for harvesting are the same as those that have been used previously.

An Archaeological Authority would identify critical areas and stipulate operational methodologies and protocols that must be followed to minimise or eliminate any adverse effect on archaeological and cultural sites that may be present.

It is considered very unlikely that an Archaeological Authority for harvesting of the forest would not be granted, but it is likely to take between two and three months before such an authority can be obtained, and no work towards the forest harvest will be possible until then to ensure no sites are unintentionally damaged.

This delay will have some adverse effect on the contractors who had been engaged to undertake harvesting work, and council will be working with those contractors to minimise this impact.