

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Work begins on Shakespear Open Sanctuary fence construction

Embargoed until Tuesday 2 March 2010, 2.30pm

Spades full of earth turned over at Shakespear Regional Park today signalled the beginning of a new era for the park and a long-awaited start on a pest proof fence that will stretch across the peninsula.

Representatives from the Auckland Regional Council (ARC), Shakespear Open Sanctuary Society Inc (SOSSI), New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and Rodney District Council (RDC) took part in a sod turning ceremony to mark the beginning of fence construction.

ARC Chairman Michael Lee says this is the day when Shakespear Regional Park takes the decisive step forward to becoming an open sanctuary.

"I look forward to the day when native birds like bellbirds, parakeets, hihi, kaka and kiwi are abundant and safely breeding on Shakespear Regional Park.

"Not only will local people come in their thousands to experience this sanctuary – but the birds we breed here will certainly be coming to visit local residents in the gardens of Whangaparaoa and beyond," says Chairman Lee.

Cr Sandra Coney, Chair of the ARC's Parks and Heritage Committee, acknowledges that this is a momentous occasion for the council and for the groups who have supported the development of the open sanctuary and fundraising efforts.

"Much work has gone into preparing for this day – from planning the best route for the fence, archaeological surveys, finding someone to build the fence and raising the money to pay for it.

"It is very rewarding to be here today and see the vision finally becoming a reality.

"Although it seems like an end point after so much hard work, this is in fact the beginning of Shakespear Open Sanctuary," says Cr Coney.

The ARC acknowledges the support of community partner SOSSI, and landowning partners the NZDF and RDC who continue to show their support and be good park neighbours. This collaboration has allowed the shortest and most cost effective fence route which will protect the greatest land area.

The pest proof fence and gates will be completed by June 2011. Pest eradication, which is necessary for resident and future wildlife to thrive, will be



undertaken in winter 2011 by a proposed poison bait drop as well as trapping and hunting.

SOSSI volunteers, lead by Chairman Allan Parker and a dedicated committee, have raised over \$400,000 in donations, fundraising efforts and grants toward the fence.

“This is a proud moment for SOSSI as we see the result of many years of fundraising beginning to take place in front of us.

“The Shakespear Open Sanctuary will be a treasured addition to this peninsula and we couldn’t have done it without the support of our community and the grant agencies who have contributed to our Fencepost Appeal,” says Mr Parker.

The Shakespear Open Sanctuary fence will be 1.75km long, from Okoromai Bay to Army Bay. The open sanctuary will cover 555 hectares of land which includes parcels of land owned by RDC and the NZDF. Although closed to public access, the RDC and NZDF land will be subject to pest control, helping to maintain the pest-free status of the open sanctuary.

Public access to the park will remain unchanged. Automated vehicle gates will allow the public access to the park while keeping unwanted pests out. These gates will be installed after the fence is completed and SOSSI is continuing to fundraise for the gates.

“The fundraising isn’t over yet,” says Mr Parker. “We still need around \$150,000 for the automated gates. And we’re also looking for lots of new members, there’s going to be a lot of ongoing work with this sanctuary, and we’ll need an army of volunteers to help us with it.”

To join SOSSI or become an open sanctuary volunteer go to www.sossi.org.nz.

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For further information please contact:

Jo Davidson, ARC Communications, 09 366 2000 x8071 or 021 331 634

- Photographs from today’s sod turning event will be sent out on Tuesday afternoon.

Shakespear Open Sanctuary pest proof fence

- The 1.75km fence does not cross the peninsula in a straight line. Instead, the route takes into consideration the park’s rich cultural heritage, the visual impact of the fence, park operational requirements, existing vegetation and the best fit for pest exclusion.
- The overall cost of the fence (excluding the automated gates) is \$750,000.



- Funding has come from the Auckland Regional Council, SOSSI fundraising efforts and grants awarded to SOSSI.

Shakespear Open Sanctuary project partners

- Auckland Regional Council (ARC) – park owner and lead agency
- Shakespear Open Sanctuary Society Inc (SOSSI) – community group with the sole focus of developing an open sanctuary at Shakespear Regional Park, driving community involvement and fundraising for open sanctuary projects. www.sossi.org.nz
- New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) – own land within the open sanctuary area. There is no public access to NZDF land but Defence Force staff work with park staff on pest control on and around Defence land.
- Rodney District Council (RDC) – the Hibiscus Coast Sewerage Treatment Plant is situated within the open sanctuary area and operated by RDC. This too is closed to public access and RDC works with the park to ensure pest control is maintained.

Shakespear Open Sanctuary

- 550,000 people visit Shakespear Regional Park every year. This will make the Shakespear Open Sanctuary by far NZ's most visited and accessible wildlife sanctuary (compared to Tiritiri Matangi Island 33,000, Karori 30,000 and Rangitoto 100,000)
- The open sanctuary adds another layer to an already popular regional park. Its philosophy integrates conservation with recreation and farming (and in this case a military training base and sewerage treatment plant).
- Once construction of the fence and gates is complete, pest eradication will be undertaken in winter 2011. The area of park inside the fence will be closed to the public during this period.
- Wildlife will respond to pest eradication, some will immigrate and establish from nearby Tiritiri Matangi Island, others will need to be assisted by translocation.