



Media Release
Tuesday 6 May 2014

Plan for the Future of McHughs Forest Park under consultation

Consultation opens next week on a development plan for McHughs Forest Park. As part of the consultation a drop in session on the development plan will be held at Darfield Library on Monday 19 May from 3.30 – 7pm.

The 43 hectare park is located to the west of Darfield Township and under the plan it would be developed as a forest park which could be used for walking and cycling, while continuing to operate as a production forest.

McHughs Forest Park was originally established as a plantation in 1893 with mixed conifers. Today the forest is mostly Douglas Fir with *Pinus radiata* around the perimeter, along with a mix of other species. The park sits just off State Highway 73 – the main route linking Christchurch to the West Coast and a number of ski fields, so it could be used by visitors and tourists as well as Selwyn residents.

The plantation was previously owned by Selwyn Plantation Board and was purchased in 2013 by Selwyn District Council. A working group was formed last year to create a master plan for the development and management of the forest.

Consultation was undertaken in August last year to gather ideas from the community about how the park could be used in the future. These ideas have been used to help develop the draft plan.

Councillor Sam Broughton who chairs the working group says that the draft plan would allow walking and cycling tracks to be developed, while still remaining as a forest which is home to a range of native and exotic species and birdlife. "We also plan to install facilities that will encourage people to use the park including a play area, picnic areas, rest benches, toilets and parking."

"The park is considered to be one of the most important Douglas Fir forests in New Zealand and we also want to install signage to educate people about the forest and its history," he adds.

"We are encouraging people to come along to the drop in session at Darfield Library to find out more about plans for the park and share their comments on how they think it should be used," says Councillor Broughton.

A Friends of the Forest group has also been formed, made up of volunteers who can assist with maintaining and developing the park. The group is looking for new members. Anyone who is interested in joining can contact Sally Kemp on 3472 851 or email sally.kemp@selwyn.govt.nz.

Consultation on the draft McHughs Forest Park Development Plan opens on Monday 12 May and closes on Monday 23 June 2014. A copy of the draft plan and a submission form will be available online at www.selwyn.govt.nz/haveyoursay from 12 May. The plan and submission forms will also be available from Council libraries and service centres from that date.

Ends

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