

# Kauri Dieback Track Closures FAQs



## Track upgrades – what are the measures used?

The aim of the track upgrade work is to protect kauri roots and to eliminate wet and muddy sections – ensuring visitors don't accidentally spread the disease by moving soil around with them.

DOC upgrades tracks by:

- Improving the track surface by reshaping and using aggregate
- Protecting kauri roots by resurfacing with geoweb with a bark/aggregate mix or building boardwalks and/or steps
- Improving drainage
- Re-routing a track away from kauri
- Installing cleaning stations

## Are there protocols for contractors undertaking the track upgrade?

Contractors undertaking the track upgrade work have to follow intense cleaning protocols not required on track work outside kauri forests e.g.:

- All mechanical equipment must be thoroughly steam cleaned prior to going on site.
- Materials such as gravel and bark must come from an approved source.
- Specific Hygiene Areas must be set up along sections of the track. These are controlled areas where the contractor must undertake a four step hygiene process every time - before entering and prior to exiting.
- There is to be no digging around kauri trees. All pile/peg positions for boardwalks, stairs etc must be first probed and only if no roots are encountered, the pile/peg then driven into the ground. The probing tool is cleaned and sprayed between each probe.
- All timber and material waste must be disposed of at an approved disposal facility for PTA contaminated material.

## Is the maintenance different for tracks with kauri on them?

To reduce the chance of kauri dieback being spread, the maintenance regime of upgraded tracks in kauri forests is much higher and more frequent than on tracks outside kauri forests.

## Will every track have a cleaning station?

- Every track that has been upgraded will have a cleaning station installed at the entrance/exit.
- New cleaning stations have been developed and are currently being tested in the field. Feedback from rangers and the public are being incorporated into improving the design so they are fit for purpose. These will then be rolled out.

## **What were your considerations for closing a track?**

- Kauri protection
- Tracks that are high risk; kauri dieback is present and/or suspected in the area
- Visitor use; tracks that are low use and too expensive to upgrade and maintain
- Each track has been assessed for the best mitigation method to protect kauri, which can include closure. However, a key consideration for a track closure is that it can be effectively defended and will not exacerbate the risk of kauri dieback spread.

## **Why are kauri stands vulnerable?**

Kauri stands are vulnerable because their roots become intertwined enabling the disease to spread through the whole stand if one becomes infected.

## **What are the issues with steep tracks?**

- Tracks on steep gradients can be difficult and expensive to upgrade and maintain.
- Kauri on steep gradients have the additional risk from the disease spreading downhill when it rains.

## **Are you closing tracks that don't have any kauri on them?**

No. All tracks being closed have kauri on or close to the track.

## **Will these tracks be opened in the future?**

Closure is permanent unless future information becomes available that would ensure no risk to kauri if these tracks were re-opened.

## **What about other vectors?**

Human activity is the leading cause of infected soil movement (on footwear and equipment). However, it is acknowledged that the pathogen can also be moved by animals - particularly pigs and cattle.

## **How you can help stop the spread?**

- Clean your footwear and gear of all soil and plant matter before and after visiting a kauri forest. We recommend gear is cleaned thoroughly before you leave home.
- Use the cleaning station on arrival at the forest.
- Stay on the track.
- If using poles, ensure they are also cleaned and only placed within the actual track, or don't use them in kauri forests.