

04 June 2024



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 06 May 2024, in which you asked for:

“I would like to find out the following information about Te Paki track. I requested this information through the media team on May 6 but have subsequently been told I need to make an Official Information Act request. As per the legislation, an official information request does not need to specifically mention the act, so I expect a response within 20 working days of my original request, with June 4 being the last day. I would like this information to be emailed to me. To reiterate, my questions are:

- 1. a. Which parts of Te Paki Track are closed due to storm damage?*
- 1. b. What sort of damage has occurred and when is it expected to reopen?*
- 2. Residents say some parts of the track near Tapotupotu Bay are marked as a Biosecurity Area, see picture attached. Where exactly is the biosecurity area and what is the biosecurity threat?*
- 3. Can people still walk on the tracks through the biosecurity area? Why or why not?*
- 4. Does the Department of Conservation agree the signs are confusing for people, as it is not clear if they can walk on the track? Will any changes be made to the signs?*
- 5. The tracks have been closed in the past due to the dangers of wild dogs - is this still a problem?”*

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982. Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. 1a. Which parts of Te Paki Track are closed due to storm damage?

All tracks east of State Highway 1 within Te Paki Recreation Reserve are currently closed due to storm damage caused by multiple weather events in 2023. These events are known as Cyclone Hale, Cyclone Gabrielle, and specific location ‘weather bombs’ that continued after these two events, the last major event occurring in May 2023.

1b. What sort of damage has occurred and when is it expected to reopen?

The multiple weather events of 2023 caused over-saturation of water in the area resulting in slips/under slips, blowout of filled areas of track, tree falls, exposure of ko-iwi, and loss of timber boardwalks across the lagoon.

The Tapotupotu road, Te Paki stream road, Lighthouse track, and western section of the Te Paki Coastal network were assessed as the highest priority work as these are high-user tourist attractions. The budget was secured from government cyclone recovery funds to reinstate the infrastructure and ensure the network was safe to use by the public. The work was completed in December 2023 and open for the public before the busy Christmas period.

The eastern section of the Te Paki coastal track network was assessed as a longer-term priority. A reassessment of the network and experiences on offer is required. Discussions between local Iwi Ngāti Kuri and DOC regarding this area include infrastructure needs in preparedness for future weather events, managing biosecurity risks like Kauri Dieback, protection of wāhi tapu, biodiversity enhancement in the face of climate change and ensuring a safe and enjoyable visitor experience is all part of the discussion. This will take time to understand, scope and design a business case for future investment.

2. Residents say some parts of the track near Tapotupotu Bay are marked as a Biosecurity Area, see picture attached. Where exactly is the biosecurity area and what is the biosecurity threat?

There are kauri trees present in the wider reserve area. Soil testing has occurred in these areas to determine if *Phytophthora agathidicida* (PA) is present, commonly known as Kauri Dieback. PA is a fungus-type pathogen that damages the tree's root system. [Kauri Dieback Factsheet](#). We are yet to find out the results of the testing.

Regardless of if the tests come back negative or positive, we continue to review the risks and assess what is appropriate infrastructure, signage, and information for the visitor.

3. Can people still walk on the tracks through the biosecurity area? Why or why not?

No, not at present as stated in question 1a.

4. Does the Department of Conservation agree the signs are confusing for people, as it is not clear if they can walk on the track? Will any changes be made to the signs?

Yes, they are. We are in the process of renewing the signs with Ngāti Kuri to provide clear and appropriate information to visitors.

5. The tracks have been closed in the past due to the dangers of wild dogs - is this still a problem?

The primary reason for the current track closures is weather damage.

We remain vigilant and continue to work with local landowners, Ngāti Kuri and Far North District Council (FNDC) to ensure control measures are in place. We continue to advise visitors to our western section of the Te Pahi Coastal track to report any sighting to FNDC dog control 0800 920 029.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) may be published on the Department's website.

[Redacted]

Nāku noa, nā

[Redacted]

Joel Lauterbach
Acting Regional Operations Director, Northern North Island
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai