

# stuff

## Council owned forest near Nelson may be replanted in natives and exotics

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Kingsland Forest covers about 150 hectares behind Richmond, on the flanks of the Barnicoat Range. It may be replanted in natives and permanent woodland.

Kingsland Forest, behind Richmond, may be replanted in natives and exotics.

Tasman District councillors on Thursday will be asked to approve a draft plan for public consultation that proposes retiring the land from commercial forestry and replanting it.

"It's exciting for the wider region to have that sort of development so close to town," said mayor Tim King, who was a member of the *Kingsland Forest Development Plan* steering group that helped create the proposal for the council-owned asset.

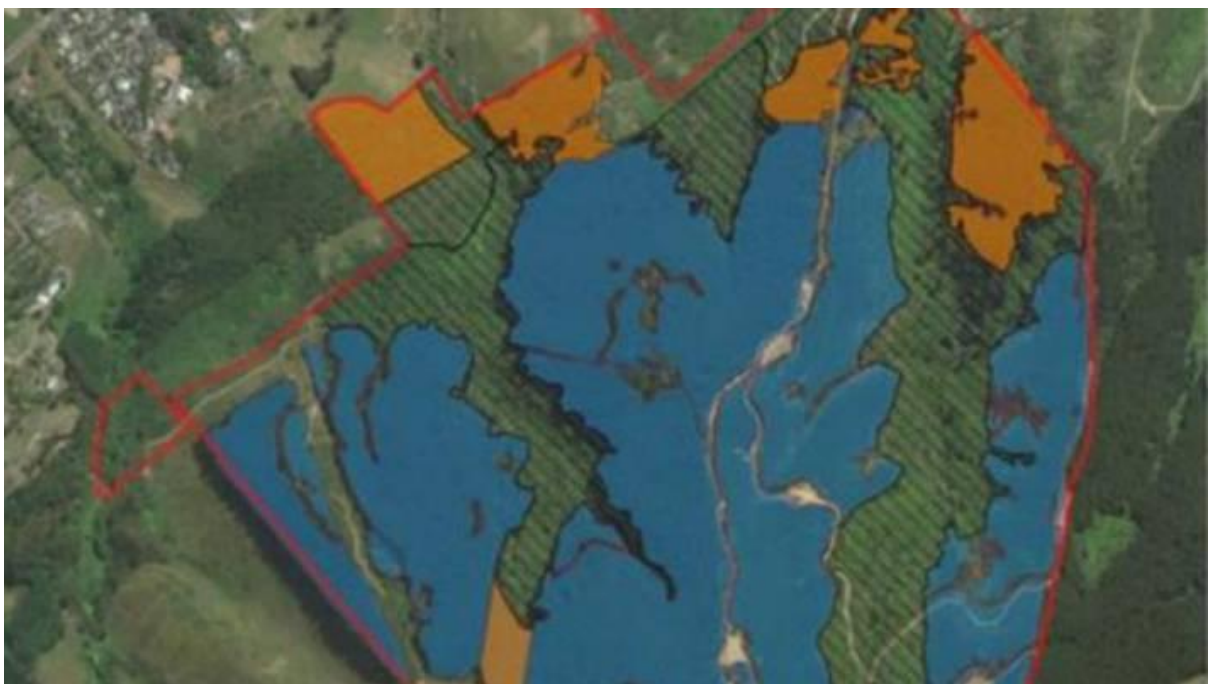
Covering about 150 hectares, Kingsland Forest is on the flanks of the Barnicoat Range immediately behind Richmond. About two-thirds of the forest is planted in *Pinus radiata*, of which the council is due to harvest a "significant portion" over the next few years. There are also gullies of remnant and regenerating native forest that the council and volunteers have been restoring via additional planting and pest control.

The forest is already popular for recreation – mountainbiking, walking and dog walking in particular. There were more than 45,000 recorded passes of track counters at Easby Park, 28,000 at Jimmy Lee Creek and 15,000 at Hill St South entrances to the forest between February and September 2019.

King said the growing population coupled with forest's proximity to Richmond, native bush areas and "awesome views" meant the forest was in demand for recreation.

That closeness to Richmond along with issues with stormwater management and the steepness of the land also meant Kingsland was "not an ideal place for plantation forestry".

The draft plan says Kingsland generates about \$2m in net harvesting income every 28 years, split across several harvesting cycles – the poorest performing forest in the council portfolio. Kingsland has an internal rate of return of 5.8 per cent while the average across the portfolio is 7.1 per cent.



A proposal for replanting Kingsland Forest shows permanent exotic woodland in blue and native forest restoration in orange.

A staff report says that rate of return is further reduced to about 2 per cent if the costs of managing the native gullies within the forest are considered.

"The reasons for this relatively poor performance despite proximity to log markets is the highly visual location and proximity to a residential area nearby and extensive recreational use of the forest," the draft plan says. "These factors all add cost and complexity to operations."

King said due to all these issues, the council decided to look at the option of retiring the land from plantation forestry.

"And it forms the backdrop to Richmond," he said.

King and fellow steering group members, councillors David Ogilvie and Trevor Tuffnell, along with council staff worked to create the draft plan over the past year, which involved engagement with interested groups and individuals including iwi. A survey of forest users in February and March drew 479 responses with almost 350 of those indicating they wanted more native plants.

Plantation forestry covers about 103ha. The harvest of most of the pine trees is due to take place in stages over the next few years with two compartments of younger trees to be harvested in about 2030.



King said it was proposed the replanting would be done in stages as the pine trees were harvested, beginning in about two years. It was also proposed to develop zones for mountainbikers and walkers to avoid potential conflict.

"We're looking at, over time, creating areas predominantly one or the other," he said.

Increases in general rates, estimated at up to 0.09 per cent for 2021-22, are anticipated in light of the lost revenue from forestry.

The draft plan says the owners of the neighbouring Silvan Forest, for which harvesting has started, "are now looking at a complete change of land use".

"Due to the steep land, high visibility and proximity to a significant residential population as well as the ongoing risk from forestry operations, a large-scale arboretum comprising both natives and exotics is currently being planned for this area."

If councillors on Thursday approve the draft *Kingsland Forest Development Plan*, it is due to go out for public consultation between December 18 and March 6.

Source: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/118076245/council-owned-forest-near-nelson-may-be-replanted-in-natives-and-exotics>