

**Applicant Information Form 1a  
Notified or non-notified process**

**A. Applicant Details**

*Applicant name:* Manaaki Group Holdings Limited

*Legal status:* Registered Company

*Trading Name:* Rainforest Experiences New Zealand

*Postal address:* 7B Kiwi Street Taupo 3351 New Zealand

*Street address:* 7B Kiwi Street Taupo 3351 New Zealand

*Registered Office of Company:* 7B Kiwi Street Taupo 3351 New Zealand

*Phone:* 07 376 5888

*Contact Person and Designation:* Chris Birt, Director

*Email:* [admin@rainforestexperiencesnz@xtra.co.nz](mailto:admin@rainforestexperiencesnz@xtra.co.nz)

**B. Activities Applied For**

Land - B: Use of public conservation land for private/commercial facility/structures

**C. Background Experience of Applicant**

The Principal of the Applicant Company, Chris Birt, has been involved with tourism since 1983 and has been a developer, operator and marketer of tourism activities continuously since 1984. He operated a commercial rafting business (Rafting Unlimited/Centreks Rafts) from 1984 to 1996 and has been an operator of multi-day and single-day guided walks in Whirinaki Forest Park (now Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tane Conservation Park) since 1993.

Mr Birt served on the national executive of the New Zealand Adventure Tourism Council from 1993 till 1996, playing a key role in the development of operational codes of practice for the sea kayaking, commercial horse trekking and guided walks sectors during this period.

He was a founding member of the New Zealand Multi-Day Guided Walks Marketing Group, developed by Tourism New Zealand in 1996 to represent the multi-day guided walks sector, and remains the only North Island member to this day.

He was a founding member of the Central North Island Maori Tourism Society (the Maori Regional Tourism Organisation) and served more than a decade as a Director of that organisation.

Over the last three decades Mr Birt has been a tourism publicist, promoter and public relations contractor for a number of private and public sector organisations, including 10 years as media advisor to the Taupo District Council and its tourism marketing unit

(1992-2002) and two years as Tourism and Marketing Advisor to the Opotiki District Council (2010-2012). He has had extensive experience in Events Marketing and Management throughout the Central North Island region.

A full summary of his Tourism and Events experience is detailed in the CV enclosed with this application.

#### **D. Testimonials**

Testimonials relating to the Director of the Applicant Company are detailed in the CV enclosed with this application.

Testimonials relating to the Applicant Company's Whirinaki business and future 3-day walk development are enclosed with this application (Attachment B1).

#### **E: Consultation Undertaken**

The intention of the Applicant Company to seek a lease for the proposed site in the Moerangi Valley of Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tane Conservation Park has been conveyed to three of the five iwi recognised as having status on this Public Conservation Land [refer Whirinaki Conservation Management Plan, operative 09 October 2017 - pages 14-17]. The iwi briefed on this proposed development are Ngati Whare (04.01.2013) Tuhoe (08.03.2105) and Ngati Manawa ( 27.09.2016).

Recognising its mana whenua status and co-governance role at Whirinaki, alongside the Department of Conservation, specific consultation was conducted with Ngati Whare. A log of consultation undertaken with Ngati Whare iwi is attached to this application (Appendix B2). This formal consultation commenced on 18 November 2012 and concluded on 10 March 2013.

Subsequent to this formal consultation, a request was made by the Department of Conservation (via Permissions Advisor Martin Carter) that a Cultural Impact Assessment be undertaken. A copy of that CIA - prepared with input from Ngati Whare Treaty claims historian John Hutton - is enclosed with this application.

This Cultural Impact Assessment report was delivered to the Chairman of Te Runanga o Ngati Whare on 21 August 2014 with a request that any feedback or comments be provided within 14 days. No feedback or comment has been received.

It is worthy of note that the long-term use of lease sites within Whirinaki Forest Park has been the subject of discussions between the Principal of the Applicant Company and Ngati Whare - whanau, hapu and iwi - for more than 15 years.

Te Runanga o Ngati Whare has supported all of the guided walk concession applications by the Director of the Applicant Company since that mandated body was established in 1999. Previous support, provided to the Department of Conservation in writing during other concession applications from this company, has noted that the tourism business of Mr Birt has *had a positive effect on the people of Ngati Whare and the environment many of them live in.*



In addition to the formal consultation relevant to this application, the use of the Moerangi Valley proposed tourism site has been canvassed several times with representatives of the Ngati Whare on a one-to-one basis. That iwi has been made fully aware that use of a site in the Moerangi Valley, for tourism accommodation purposes, is the second and final stage of the Applicant Company's business plan for a 3-day walk in Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tane Conservation Park.

None of the three iwi referred to above have raised objections at any time to the intention of the Applicant Company to lodge an application for this proposed site.

In late 2016, Ngati Whare formally supported the grant of a lease on the existing tourism accommodation site which had been developed in the Okahu Valley by the Principal of the Applicant Company in 1989. At that time, the Permission's Advisor [Arna Litchfield] recorded: "*Ngati Whare supported the 30-year term for the lease, on the basis they could see the advantage of allowing the applicant to have a long term tenure of the site to maximise his [its] ability to source adequate funding to ensure business success and long term sustainability.*"

It is recognised that Ngati Whare iwi has its own aspirations for tourism operations on this Public Conservation Land. In the context of Lease applications, the Applicant wishes to draw attention to the report of DOC's Permissions Advisor/acting team leader to the Decision-Maker in 2016, in relation to the Okahu valley lease application by the Applicant. [File PAC 22 07 06 - Page 4]

- *That this application does not exclude Ngati Whare iwi, nor any other applicant, from seeking a concession to operate tourism or other business ventures in The Park. [Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tane Conservation Park].*
- *Furthermore the Department does not have the ability to consider the economic or social benefit of any activity, nor may it decline an opportunity to one applicant so that another may benefit from that same opportunity.*

The Applicant records that in the absence of any relevant amendments to the Conservation Act 1987 in the intervening year and a half (since 2016) these statements remain intact and must be considered in relation to this new, separate, application.

## **F. Insurance**

The Applicant Company already holds Public Liability and Rural Fire Suppression insurance cover pursuant to its Guiding Concession. There is an acceptance by the Applicant Company that the insurance cover required by the Department of Conservation will be renewed annually and that additional cover for the structures and facilities to be developed on the Lease Site will be obtained as required.

### **G: Credit Application Form**

No Credit Application Form is enclosed as the Applicant Company is an existing account holder with the Department of Conservation. Additionally a bond of \$1000 is held by the Department of Conservation.

### **H: Public Notification**

The Applicant Company acknowledges that this Lease Application pertains to exclusive use of public conservation land and is for a lease for a term longer than 10 years and thus may be subject to a Public Notification process.

### **I: Fees**

The Applicant Company acknowledges that the current estimated cost of processing a standard concession within a single conservancy is \$1330 plus GST but that further costs will be incurred as part of the public notification process.

The Applicant Company also acknowledges that it will be required to pay annual fees throughout the Concession period. These are:

- Annual management fee to cover administration time; and/or
- Monitoring fee (if required) to cover the cost of monitoring the effects of the activity within the lease site; and/or
- Annual rental (land use concession eg lease)

### **K: Check list**

Proof of legal status

Two written Testimonials

Written Consultation log

Credit Application Form: Existing account holder 24861

### **Declaration**

I/We agree that the Department of Conservation can provide these details to the Department's Credit Checking Agency to enable it to conduct a full credit check.

I/We agree that the information in this application is true and correct.

I/We agree that any change which affects the trading address, legal entity, structure of management or control of the Applicant Company (as detailed in this application) will be notified to the Department of Conservation within 7 days of that change becoming effective.

I/We agree to notify the Department of Conservation of any disputed charges within 14 days of the date of the invoice.

I/We agree to fully pay the Department of Conservation for any invoice received on or before the due date.

I/We agree to pay all costs incurred (including interest, legal costs and debt recovery fees) to recover any money owed on this account.

I/We agree that the credit account provided by the Department of Conservation may be withdrawn by the Department of Conservation, if terms and conditions of the credit account are not met.

Applicant

Signed:



Name: Chris Birt

Designation: Director

Date: 16 May 2018