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Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



TE RORO
Commercial Development Ltd.



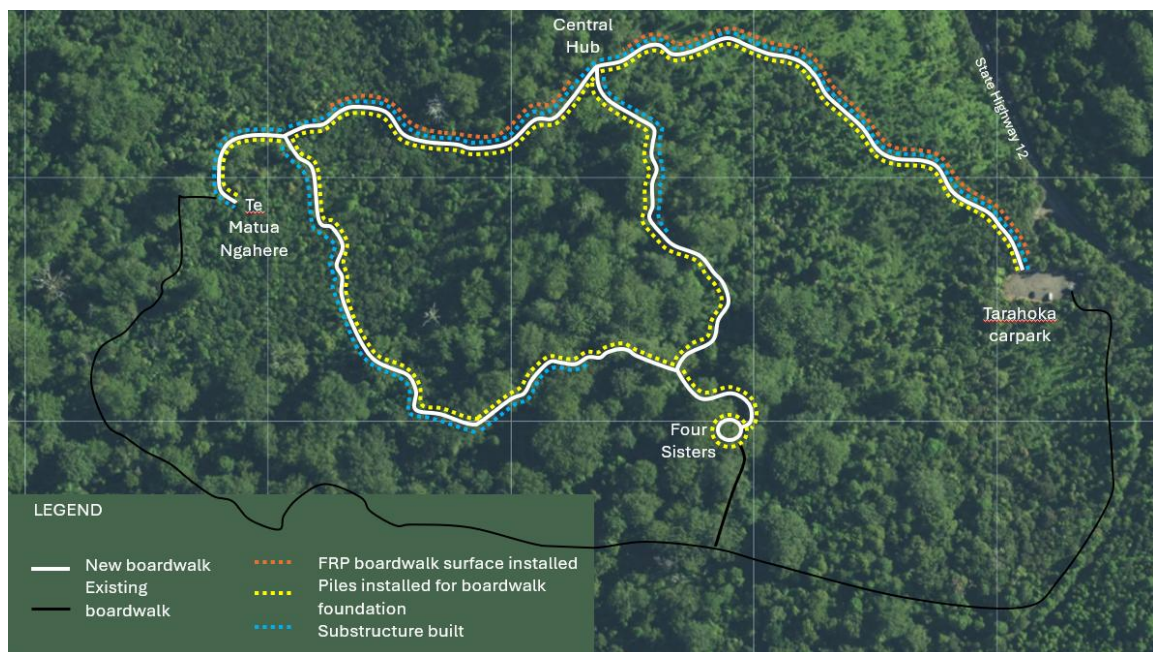
Rākau Rangatira Progress Newsletter

September 2026

We're pleased to be able to share a spring 2026 update on construction progress of the enhanced visitor experience through the Waipoua Forest to Te Matua Ngahere (father of the forest) which will also allow the reopening of the Four Sisters. The new boardwalks and viewing platforms will provide safe off ground access adding protections for the forest from kauri dieback risks.

The new track alignment will give visitors the chance to experience unique areas such as the Tarahoka gumlands and Te Matua Ngahere wetlands that have previously been inaccessible.

Construction Progress Map



Progress Details

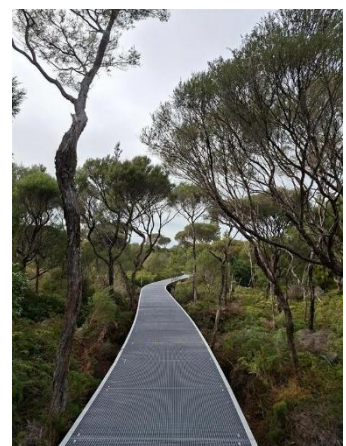
The construction crew is progressing well through the work while navigating the tail end of winter conditions and responding to necessary additional scope requirements.

To meet DOC's short walk standards for accessibility, approximately 300m of elevated structures (parts of the boardwalk 1m above the ground) have been required. Due to the rainforest conditions, the final gradients and heights were not confirmed until the site had been cleared, surveyed and the alignment probed for roots and other underground impediments. This led to design alterations, addition of handrails and building consent exemptions to be submitted.

The focus of the project team is shifting to the finishing items such as refurbishment of the kauri wash station, wayfinding signage and reinstatement.

By the numbers:

- Piling installation 100 per cent completed: 1,640 piles have been installed to support the new boardwalk, comprising 1,609 galvanised screw piles and 31 hand-driven timber piles, creating a durable foundation for the structure.
 - 90 per cent of the boardwalk substructure completed.
 - Demolition of the old boardwalk is 90 per cent complete.
 - 40 per cent of the fibre-reinforced plastic (FRP) panels installed, with approximately 1,229 panels to be fitted across the project, each weighing around 40 kg.
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Photos by Keir Projects

Upcoming Works

Work to complete the remaining boardwalk substructure and the substructure at Four Sisters viewing platform will be a priority. This will enable workers to complete the bulk of the on-ground works. FRP panel installation will continue along completed sections of substructure.

Installation of handrails along elevated sections will also begin.

Environmental protections overcoming challenging ground conditions

Challenging ground conditions have added some complexity to the project, with areas of shallow hard pan and a near surface basalt lava flow encountered along sections of the new boardwalk alignment. To protect the surrounding wetland environment and minimise ground disturbance, the team worked closely with geotechnical specialists to develop alternative foundation solutions, including the use of hand-driven timber piles in affected areas. Although these conditions required changes to the original construction approach, they have been successfully managed, allowing progress to continue while protecting sensitive tree roots and the natural environment.



Photo by Keir Projects

Schedule

As noted above, some project delivery challenges have affected the programme as construction progressed. Project Governance (jointly represented by DOC and Te Roroa) has therefore acknowledged a revised anticipated completion date.

Concessionaires have been notified and advised the new experience is expected to be open to the public by early December.

More detailed communications regarding the public reopening will be released in the coming weeks.



Photo by Keir Projects

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