

Reasons why you should not put an obstacle limitation surface over our farm by Imogen Barnes (16) and Phoebe Barnes (15)

We would like to say how annoyed we are that someone could even think about making our grandparent's cut down their Kahikatea trees. We also feel sorry for these people as they have not experienced what it is like to grow up with them. What it is like to share them with friends, to enjoy playing amongst the unfenced trees and to eat the berries when you are hungry. What it is like to wake up to the sounds of birds singing amongst them, to listen to the eerie sounds at night or to enjoy watching the birds that congregate around them and fly in and out.

Our favourite game, every time we had friends over in the evening, was always spotlight, and it is still our favourite game to this day. Spotlight amongst the Kahikatea trees behind our house. We have to get from one end of the trees, under the electric fence and out at the other end of the trees before we get spotted by the catchers' torch. Some of the trees will safely allow four of us to hide behind them and keep out of the torchlight, that is how big they are. Believe you me, when the trees are that big, catching people is not easy.

My grandfather, David Barnes, has looked after these trees for a long time, longer than even my dad has been alive. He has given us a love of nature, a love of the trees. These trees have great sentimental value to all our family both past and present.

Our grandfather has taught us so much over the years through first hand experiences. Logan, my cousin, won a school environmental award at the end of last year for the knowledge that he gained by spending time with my Poppa in the school holidays helping him with pest control and looking after the forest. Another of my cousins, Jordan, was so inspired by my grandfathers efforts to keep possums out of the forest fragment that he designed and made a possum trap at high school.



The first time he used the trap at his house he caught three possums in one night. This is a photo of the second version of the possum trap that he made for Poppa to go in his forest fragment.

There are generations of local people who have been able to experience these trees. It is not just our family but many of our neighbours from Perkins Road who enjoy walking on the farm too.

My grandfather was a scout leader for many years and my grandmother was a guide leader. They gave children in the 1980's camping experiences that they would never forget. Camps were held on the farm and children received a first hand



experience of nature, fostering a love of trees for life.

Just as our father did, we have both enjoyed having our friends camp with us on the farm, children from Te Kowhai School as well as Hamilton Girls' High school. We will never forget these experiences and nor will they.

We are the fourth generation of our family to live on the farm at 90 Perkins



Road. The trees have been there for each generation and should be there for generations to come. We want our own children to be able to experience these trees as we have done, as my father has done before us, as his father did before him. Is it too much to ask that other generations can experience what we have?

We were lucky enough to spend an evening in the King Country with a DOC officer counting bats. We had to first count the number that we could see roosting in the cave and then we sat outside with bat monitoring equipment to count the number of bats leaving and returning to the cave. This was an amazing experience. We have not seen a bat in our forest fragment, but it is exciting to know that bats have been seen near it. That we may be helping to protect them from extinction.

My grandfather was actively involved in the Te Otamanui walkway. Over many years he took groups of children from Te Kowhai School to plant trees on the walkway, as well as community plantings. It is very sad to think that the Kahikatea trees on the Te Otamanui walkway that we ourselves planted may also be at risk.

Remember district plans are designed to protect our futures, not just to protect airports, but local people AND local trees. We should be working with nature not against it.

In fact I am pretty sure that there are rules in place that should be protecting our trees. This one for example:-

22.2.8 Indigenous vegetation clearance outside a Significant Natural Area

P1 (a) Indigenous vegetation clearance outside a Significant Natural Area identified on the planning maps or in Schedule 30.5 (Urban Allotment Significant Natural Areas) must be for the following purposes:

- (i) Removing vegetation that endangers human life or existing buildings or structures;
- (ii) Maintaining productive pasture through the removal of up to 1000m² per single consecutive 12 month period of manuka and/or kanuka that is more than 10m from a waterbody, and less than 4m in height;
- (iii) Maintaining existing tracks and fences;
- (iv) Maintaining existing farm drains;

- (v) Conservation fencing to exclude stock or pests;
- (vi) Gathering of plants in accordance with Maaori custom and values; or
- (vii) A building platform and associated access, parking and manoeuvring up to a total of 500m² clearance of indigenous vegetation.

The runway at Te Kowhai is a strip of grass, okay a flat strip of grass that might have taken a bit of work, with a few tin sheds to house planes. These could easily be moved to a location with no hills and no native trees likely to grow too tall. It would be totally impossible to move one 100 year old tree that is 35 metres high successfully let alone hundreds. An airport could be moved in a matter of a few years, (based on how long it has taken them to do the road at Rotokauri) these trees have taken approximately 100 years to grow. We are not asking them to move their airfield, just keep it as it is and let us keep our trees.

Who could, who would, deny the next generation and all subsequent generations the opportunity to experience these magnificent trees. We think they are wonderful now, just think how magnificent they will be in 400 years time.