



September 5 2016

Publicity release: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Far North kaumatua and kuia herald in the Spring for Conservation Week 2016

Lake Ngatu is set to come alive with spring energy this coming Wednesday 14 September 2016 for the Pīpiwhararua: Hikoi for Healthy Nature, Healthy People walk.

A joint initiative between Ngai Takoto, the Department of Conservation and Healthy Families Far North, the inaugural event is an exciting collaborative effort to encourage communities to take advantage of the district's lush outdoors while participating in easily accessible physical activity.

Conservation Week is being marked across the nation from this coming Saturday 10 September to Sunday 18 September, encouraging people to get into nature to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Department of Conservation community ranger Shayne Storey says the focus nationwide has been on encouraging children and young people into the great outdoors. However, the Te Tai Tokerau event has been organised with a different target group in mind.

"Our kuia and kaumatua are amongst the most cherished members of our communities. We see this hikoi as a wonderful opportunity to uphold the kaitiakitanga message of Conservation Week, while looking after those whom we hold most dear," she says.

The event has been themed around the pīpiwhararua – or shining cuckoo – which is traditionally recognised as the native bird whose call is a tohu, or sign, of the arrival of Spring.

The walk will commence at 10am with a mihi whakatau by Ngai Takoto at the Lake Ngatu Recreation Reserve carpark on Sweetwater Road. The walk will then follow the 4km loop track at a leisurely pace, where local providers will be offering kayaking and traditional Maori games, rongoa Maori and weaving demonstrations along the way, culminating in a communal BBQ back at the gathering site.



Walkers are encouraged to bring along sensible footwear, sunwear and plenty of water for hydration.

Healthy Families Far North manager Allan Pivac says the day is a result of a community taking a national campaign and turning it into one that is locally meaningful, with the potential for becoming an annual event.

“Healthy Families Far North is a revolutionary approach to health that engages community leadership to improve people’s lives where they live, learn, work and play. The Pīpiwharauroa: Hikoi for Healthy Nature, Healthy People walk is a fantastic opportunity for our communities to engage in physical activity while maximising the best that the Far North’s natural resources have to offer,” he says.