



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RAISING SAFETY AWARENESS FOR USERS OF WHAKAREWAREWA FOREST

Timberlands, in partnership with the Rotorua Lakes Council, Regional Tourism Organisation RotoruaNZ and the CNI Iwi Collective, are urging all recreational users of Whakarewarewa Forest to stay out of unauthorised operational areas to ensure safety.

Timberlands manages the Kaingaroa Forest Estate, one of the largest sustainable harvest forests in the Southern Hemisphere. Alongside iwi landowners, Timberlands provides access to 200 kilometres of mountain biking routes.

Timberlands General Manager of Sustainability, Colin Maunder, says Whakarewarewa Forest is a recreational haven for mountain bikers, walkers and horse riders, but it is also a commercial forest and those using the forest must never enter unauthorised areas.

“Operational forestry is a serious work environment, and safety for everyone is our first priority at Timberlands.”

The forestry company wants to raise community awareness to the risks involved for both recreational users and kaimahi (workers) when people do not read, or heed forest signage.

"When mountain bike riders, walkers, or hikers unlawfully enter an operational area, it creates serious risk not only for themselves but also for our workers who may be engaged in hazardous tasks such as waste thinning, aerial operations, and road edge felling activities.

“We know that the forest is a great place to ride and play, but we urge everyone to read and heed forest signage and controls for their own safety and the safety of our kaimahi.”

Maunder says the importance of taking notice of the signs in and around any forest area is vital, and shares that anyone who enters an unauthorised area can be prosecuted under the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015.

“Starting in November we are undertaking harvesting in areas of Whakarewarewa Forest and have increased controls and signage in preparation. We want to prevent the likelihood of people going into areas they shouldn’t.

"We are pleased to be partnering with our community to promote better safety behaviour across the ngahere (forest). We want to spread the word and ensure everyone can enjoy Whakarewarewa Forest safely."

Rotorua Lakes Council’s Active and Engaged Communities Manager, Rob Pitkethley, says council supports this initiative: "We fully support the efforts of Timberlands to protect our community and their workers. Timberland’s message aligns with recent work that council and its partners have been undertaking to increase safety awareness while enjoying the recreational offerings in the forest.



“Safety in our forests is a shared responsibility and we strongly urge all forest users to read and heed the signs to ensure safety at all times.”

Timberlands is particularly pleased to receive the support of RotoruaNZ, who will be communicating with local tourism operators.

Andrew Wilson, Chief Executive RotoruaNZ says, “Whakarewarewa Forest attracts thousands of visitors to our beautiful region each year, and we encourage our tourism operators to join us in educating visitors on the importance of keeping safe and heeding all signage.”

For more information about how you can stay safe in Whakarewarewa Forest, please visit the [Forest Access & Closures page of the Timberland's website](#), or contact info@tll.co.nz.

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For interviews, please contact:

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Image caption:

- Visitors to Whakarewarewa Forest are being encouraged to read and heed signage advising them to keep safe and avoid entering unauthorised work areas during harvesting activity starting in November.

About Timberlands

1. Timberlands is based in Rotorua, providing a full range of forest management services to the Kaingaroa Timberlands Partnership who owns the world renowned 200,000 ha Kaingaroa Forest Estate, situated in the central North Island of New Zealand.
2. The Health & Safety at Work Act 2015 outlines the legal responsibilities of individuals and businesses to ensure safety in workplaces and public areas.