

SUBMISSION BY SAVE OUR HILLS (UPPER HTT) INCORPORATED

PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE TO THE UPPER HUTT CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT PLAN

## Proposed Plan Change 49—Open Spaces—Variation 1

### RE: The Independent Hearing Panel’s MINUTE 9 for reconvened hearing

NAME OF SUBMITTER: SAVE OUR HILLS (UPPER HTT) INCORPORATED. [SOH]

POSTAL ADDRESS OF SUBMITTER: P.O. Box 48-070 Silverstream, Upper Hutt, 5142

AGENT ACTING FOR SUBMITTER (IF APPLICABLE): N/A

ADDRESS FOR SERVICE (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE): Same as above

CONTACT TELEPHONE : 027 226 3364

CONTACT EMAIL: [helpsaveourhills@gmail.com](mailto:helpsaveourhills@gmail.com)

I could gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission: No

### Details of submission

Thank you for this opportunity to make a submission regarding new evidence provided by Council’s expert, Mr Goldwater (Wilding Consulting).

We refer to Figure 3 in Council’s revised s42a report (below):



Figure 3 – Combined extent of SNA for the Silverstream Spur with magenta outline showing extent of significant indigenous vegetation identified in the 2020 site visit and white outline showing additional extent from 2022 site visit. The [updated](#) combined area, within the Silverstream Spur, is recommended to be identified as the “Silverstream Spur Natural Area” on the planning maps in Appendix [A1](#) and the ecological expert recommends removing half of the area shown in white above.

SOH seeks that no road or infrastructure be allowed through the Spur, and therefore agrees with the 2022 site visit assessment to add the area bounded by a white outline the the Significant Natural Area, and disagrees with Mr Goldwater’s recommendation to remove this area from the Silverstream Spur Natural Area.

Our reasons are that the Spur is Natural Open Space and should be a reserve for public enjoyment, underpinned by a vision to regenerate the Spur with native vegetation and birdlife.

This is a long-term vision. We deplore opinions that consider only the here and now. The public has been deprived for some 30 years of pedestrian access to the Spur. It requires a long-term vision to provide appropriate access and a well-considered long-term plan for regenerating native bush on the Spur. A major road and infrastructure is not appropriate access for pedestrian recreational use of the Spur, and must be rejected.

In SOH submission dated 4 Nov 2022 on PC49-V1 we included Appendix 2 – “Review of Boffa Miskell Report (2015) on the Ecological values of Silverstream Spur”, dated 20 April 2021, by John Campbell Forest Ecologist.

We submit today an attachment by John Campbell, Forest Ecologist, titled, “Vegetation on Silverstream Spur”, dated 02 March 2024.

Mr Campbell points out that great care must be taken in regenerating the Spur.

There are also serious negative ecological knock-on effects of opening up the SGA with a road through the Spur.

**I/We seek the following decision from the local authority** [PLEASE GIVE PRECISE DETAILS] :

- a. recognise and acknowledge the long term ecological and recreational value of the entire Spur;
- b. Keep all the existing native vegetation as seeding for future regeneration of native bush over the whole Spur;
- c. insist on a careful, well-considered and well-advised long-term plan for dealing with the pines, controlling the gorse, and regenerating native vegetation
- d. ensure the proposed road and infrastructure through the Spur is rejected to avoid the likelihood of rampaging gorse creating a fire risk and overtaking the regeneration of native plant and tree species.

Please indicate whether you wish to be heard in support of your submission:

YES, I **do** wish to be heard in support of my submission.

Please indicate whether you wish to make a joint case at the hearing if others make a similar submission:

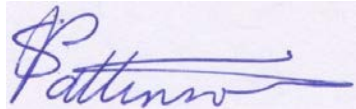
NO, I/we **do not** wish to make a joint case.

ATTACHMENT: "Vegetation on Silverstream Spur" by John Campbell, Forest Ecologist

### **Signature and date**

Signature of person making submission or person authorised to sign on behalf of person making submission:

Stephen Pattinson  
President  
Save Our Hills (Upper Hutt) incorporated  
M: 027 226 3374



22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024

SIGNATURE

DATE

## Vegetation on Silverstream spur

The current vegetation is a mixture of pine forest and gorse with native species establishing in some areas

**Should the pines be removed or left as a nurse crop if it is intended to convert the area into native vegetation?**

- If the pine forest is logged, gorse will grow in all areas that have previously been in gorse. Gorse seeds abundantly and there can be as many as 10 000 seeds per square metre in the soil seed bank<sup>1</sup>. Seed can remain viable in the ground for 40-80 years. The pines are probably less than than 60 years old. If the soil is disturbed buried seed will germinate more readily.
- Eventually with no intervention, native vegetation would establish under pine forest when the pines have matured and opened up enough to allow more light to penetrate to the forest floor. Recovery into natives would take decades, probably at least 80-100 years. If the area were to be burnt again within this time, the recovery would be taken back to zero to start again.

### With little intervention

- If the pines are left standing and progressively thinned to create small openings in the canopy, more light would reach the ground and encourage native seedlings to establish.
- However, if the openings were to be larger and gorse seed remained in the soil and was still viable, the stronger light would induce the gorse seeds to germinate. Gorse is a nitrogen fixer and is adapted to withstand dryness: it will grow faster and out compete natives on a site.
- The age of the pine trees should be determined with a core borer before any thinning, for if the pines are younger than the 80 year viability of gorse seed, increasing the light on the forest floor could encourage gorse to establish in the light gaps. Whether gorse seed is present and able to germinate can be determined by checking whether gorse will germinate from soil samples.

### With more management

- Before the original vegetation was burnt, the upper slopes of the spur - ones that are more stable and have more leached soils, would have had hard beech forest with a kamahi understorey. The more fertile soils of the slopes and valley sides would have been occupied by black beech forest with rimu, rata, kamahi, hinau, tree ferns and other species.
- Some remnants of these forest types are nearby and can act as seed sources for natural replacement of existing pine forest, but ideally seedlings of the original species should be planted in light gaps in the pine forest, and become sources of seed, especially for species such as beech, rata and kamahi that have wind-borne seed.
- Planting to speed up the reversion to native forest should take into account that the upper part of the ridge has poorer soils and is drier during the summer, so some hand watering may be needed if there is a drought during the first summer after planting. Gorse is drought tolerant and fixes nitrogen and has a natural advantage over most other species including most natives.
- Failure rates of planted seedlings would be reduced by careful selection of the size of the seedlings and the time of year they are planted.

John Campbell  
Research Forest Ecologist

2/3/2024