

Scientists to hunt for dinosaurs

TUHOE and a group of scientists are to reach back through the mists of time to establish whether dinosaurs roamed Te Urewera.

Led by Tuhoe, the two-year project will involve palaeontologists from GNS Science and Victoria University joining members of the tribe to search for fossil remains in streams that flow through the former national park.

The Government has committed \$100,000 to the project and Tamati Kruger, the chairman of Tuhoe governance organisation Te Uru Taumatua, said the tribe was keen to understand the history of its homeland.

"Mankind and beast, we are each and all of this earth; we want to see its likeness and understand its place in our world. No doubt the past will have things to say to us about our home."

Te Uru Taumatua communication manager Waikare Kruger said Te Uru Taumatua staff would join other Tuhoe members and scientists to plan the operational and logistical approach required to carry out the fossil search.

"Tuhoe will learn about preparation of fossils and preliminary scientific study of important specimens. Importantly, Tuhoe will also learn for themselves



Tamati Kruger,
Te Uru Taumatua
chairman

how to search for fossil deposits into the future."

She said it was also hoped that the search for fossils would inspire Tuhoe members to want to undertake further study.

"Of significant importance to Tuhoe is the project generating interest in Tuhoe to study earth sciences at Victoria University. The partners will work together to look at options to enable this."

Ms Kruger said the partners would work together to determine dissemination of new knowledge through a museum or visitor centre displays, and where specimens may reside.

While marine fossils are common over large areas, Te Urewera has not previously been explored for bone evidence of terrestrial dinosaurs.

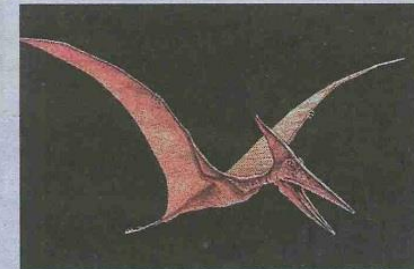
History points to Te Urewera dinosaurs

SCIENTISTS have suspected dinosaurs roamed Te Urewera ever since Joan Wiffen found a theropod fossil in 1975.

The Hawke's Bay amateur palaeontologist discovered the tail bone of a theropod dinosaur in the Maungahounga Valley, in Northern Hawke's Bay, near Te Urewera's southern boundary.

Only a tail vertebra was found and it was thought to be from a type of Allosaur,

Mrs Wiffen later found bones from a hypsilophodont, a pterosaur, an ankylosaur, mosasaurs and plesiosaurs. In 1999, Mrs Wiffen, who died in 2009, discovered the vertebra bone



MISTS OF TIME: A Pterosaur dinosaur.

of a titanosaur in a tributary of the Te Hoe River, which flows south into Hawke's Bay from its source west of Lake Waikaremoana.

However, remains of carnivorous dinosaurs have been found near the southern Te Urewera. Geological mapping by GNS also shows Maungataniwha Sandstone, deposited 85 million years

ago, is present over large areas of the remote ranges and valleys in the area.

The Maungataniwha Sandstone is a sign that terrestrial fossils may be present in the area.