

New visitor centre a 'living' thing

WATER features will ensure Waikaremoana Tribal Authority's new visitor centre is in keeping with its rainforest environment.

Located near Home Bay, the \$6 million "living" building for Te Whare Hou o Waikaremoana includes landscaping and overlooks the wetland and Lake Waikaremoana.

Waikaremoana Tribal Authority project co-ordinator Oriwia Taylor said there would be a big fire place with bricks designed to hold the heat in the new centre.

By the end of August, the roof should be on and the building watertight.

Ms Taylor said the design had culverts installed to take the hillside water down to the lake.

Its specially-contoured roof over the deck will create a veil of water during and after rain which then filters through wetland and into the lake.

Water will also trickle down chains around the pou, flowing rocks and landscaping below the deck.

The visitor centre will accommodate staff from the Waikaremoana Tribal Authority but the general manager and biodiversity office will remain at Aniwanui.

Artefacts and taonga previously displayed at the former Te Urewera visitor centre and currently in storage will be displayed on rotation at the new facility.

Te Whare Hou o Waikaremoana will also have a wananga space and cafe as well as offices for eight staff and a rest area.

The open plan design also incorporates bricks left over from Te Uru Taumatua living build.

Last week Ngati Ruapani filed an application in the Environment Court seeking an interim enforcement order against the Department of Conservation and Te Uru Taumatua preventing demolition of the

former Aniwanui Visitor Centre.

A Department of Conservation spokesperson said the former Aniwanui Visitor Centre was sited on Te Urewera.

The Department of Conservation is responsible for the building and any decisions on its future were being made in consultation with Te Urewera Board.

"It was found to be unsafe, closed to the public and DOC staff moved out in 2008.

"The Wairoa District Council



□ Nestled in the bush-clad hills of Te Urewera, the walls of the new visitor centre are going up for Te Whare Hou o Waikaremoana. The new \$6 million centre for Te Urewera is on track for completion at the end of the year.

confirmed it was dangerous with a notice under Section 123 of the Building Act.

"The decision to vacate the building in 2008 was made because the building was not weather-tight or up to earthquake standards. Simple maintenance was not able

to address these issues. The building as it currently stands is a public safety risk.

"Tuhoe are currently constructing a new Te Whare Hou o Waikaremoana, with visitor information, at Home Bay, adjacent to the Waikaremoana Holiday Park."

A Te Uru Taumatua comment spokesperson said Tuhoe had no interest in a condemned building.

"We are working in partnership to build and establish a building based on true partnership, that is occurring now at the waters edge."