**Claudelands – answers from the Kaitiaki**

*Produce mask.... This mask represents the kaitiaki who care for this land – the spirits. Imagine if we could ask the kaitiaki about how things have changed. What would you ask?*

*Take their questions.....*

*Well, using the power of drama, we can ask AND hear the answers. I will place the mask here and ask some of the questions you have asked. I may have some others, too. I will also hand around these slips of paper. Reading them, you may find that you can provide answers and speak the voice of the Kaitiaki. Some questions you may find there is no answer written, but an answer comes to you anyway....*

*[pause and check for understanding – Teacher will ask questions, participants will answer the factual questions based on information from the slips of paper they have been given. There is also opportunity for them to offer personal responses in role as Kaitiaki to more ‘feelings based’ questions.]*

*QUESTIONS*

What did it used to look like around here?

What changes have you seen

How old are these trees?

As guardian of the bush, what do you see ahead?

\*Who taught you what you know?

\*When you look around you, what do you see and how do you feel?

Is there anything else you would like us to know?

\*If you could give one message to humans like us about this bush, what would it be?

*ANSWERS – ON SLIPS HANDED AROUND*

In pre-European times there were many hundreds of acres of Kahikatea forest in Waikato.

Now only remnants of Kahikatea forest remain – no single kahikatea ‘forest’ anywhere in NZ...

In 1864 when Hamilton founded – this was 800 acres

This remnant less than 2% of original Claude’s bush

Claudes bush was the biggest forest of Kahikatea in the Waikato at time of European settlement

These trees are 300 years old – may live for another 300

Matai and rimu removed by European settlers

Grazed by cattle up to 1950s

One third of the native species recorded here in 1950 had disappeared by 1980

81 native species remain – but disappearing.

Soil was originally boggy and swampy. Drained in 1880s now much drier. The trees prefer swamps.

In a big forest, Kahikatea regenerate through big floods or other catastrophes – in a bush this size, circumstances for regeneration are not there.

1883 the possums were deliberately released on sanitarium hill (hospital) approximately 13 K away - made it here 1950s

Last Northern Rata (plant) found in 1955 – dead specimen - eaten by possum.

A large number of weeds are blown in, or brought by recreational users – hence fencing off of board walk.

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Example of regeneration project – wetlands.

<http://waiwhakareke.co.nz/54/history/maori-history>