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Improved access and walking trail at Four Springs Lake

The Tasmanian government's Inland Fisheries Service (IFS) announced in August of this year the improvement of access at Four Springs Lake, allowing for a complete circumnavigation of the lake by anglers, hikers and other interested members of the public. This was facilitated by a land transfer agreement between the IFS and Forico, which manages sustainable forest plantation adjacent to the lake.

Forico worked with the IFS to transfer ownership of the lake's perimeter to the Crown, allowing for development for community access while ensuring that access for forestry operations and public safety is maintained.

Subsequent to the transfer, the IFS invested \$180,000 for upgrades including the construction of duck boarding in places and a footbridge, along the lake's eight-kilometre circumference. Four Springs Reserve is now managed under licence by the IFS.

Four Springs is one of Tasmania's most popular recreational fisheries, given its proximity to population centres and careful management by the IFS. It is also popular with birdwatchers, kayakers and walkers. The improvements included enhancement of the car park, boat ramp and public toilet, an improved angling jetty on the western shore and a picnic table in the adjacent rotunda.

Neil Morrow, Manager Anglers Access with the IFS said 'The improvements to access and amenities at Four Springs Lake have been made possible through the cooperative relationship between IFS and Forico. As a result, the Tasmanian public, in particular freshwater anglers, benefit from increased access to Four Springs Lake in a safe and managed way that does not impact on forest operations.'

Bree Robson, Land Coordinator at Forico, said the company recognised the value of Four Springs Lake to the wider community. 'We are delighted to have helped ensure that visitors and the general public can enjoy the scenic and special surrounds and can now potentially walk the entire trail around the lake.'



While the upgrades to existing trails allow for a circumnavigation of the lake, the IFS would monitor use and condition of the rail over the first year to identify any areas that need further improvement, said Mr Morrow.

Fencing and gates were installed to provide security for neighbouring properties including Forico's plantation coupes. It was essential that access to the lake was preserved for use by Tasmanian Fire Services and forest fire-fighting crews. Forico accesses the lake for its annual 'Pumps Day' training, employees train in the use of fire-fighting vehicles and techniques.

Four Springs Lake is known to support a population of the rare species of perennial aquatic herb *Vallisneria australis*, also known as Eel Grass or River Ribbons. In Tasmania it is found in bodies of water only in the north, northeast, midlands and southeast.

'The work at Four Springs to allow access to the public and for sporting pursuits aligns well with Forico's principle of preserving the integrity of our productive and natural landscapes and facilitating well-managed access,' said Jim Wilson, General Manager of Enterprise Performance. 'This is a good example of the way in which public interests, biodiversity and a landscape with special values, and private forest enterprise can co-exist.'

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