

**(MEDIA FACTSHEET ISSUED ON 2 JUNE 2014)**

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

NParks will be stabilising the slopes, repairing the trails and restoring the forest environment within the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve. To enhance visitor experience, the more than 20-year old visitor centre will also be upgraded.

### **Enhancing Visitor Safety**

The slope stabilisation works is a pre-emptive measure taken by NParks to ensure public safety. Sections of three slopes have weakened in recent years. Slope failure could lead to a significant loss of the forest and compromise public safety. To minimise the potential of slope failure, the slopes will be stabilised using micro piles. The piles will be installed along the tarmac road, and there will be minimal impact on the forest.

### **Trail Repairs, Enrichment Planting and New Boardwalk**

Hosting more than 400,000 visitors yearly has taken its toll on the hiking trails. The heavy usage and trampling have resulted in soil compaction, erosion and gully formation. Such conditions hinder forest regeneration as they expose tree roots (increasing the potential of tree falls), and damage young saplings before they can establish themselves. The exposed tree roots may also cause hikers to trip, fall and become injured. The compacted and widened trails have also resulted in a loss of space for vegetation and tree saplings to establish and grow. These have led to the declining condition of the Reserve's ecosystem. For example, birdwatchers have observed that the Asian-fairy Bluebird and Chestnut-bellied Malkoha have retreated away from the heavily used trails at BTNR.

To mitigate the degradation, more than half of trails (over 4.5km) will be repaired. To enhance the forest habitat, enrichment planting efforts will take place alongside the trails. Native plants such as the *Shorea curtisii*, *Parishia insignis*, and *Streblus elongates* will be planted.



As part of a holistic plan to mitigate the impact of trampling and soil compaction, a 1.3 km raised boardwalk will also be installed sensitively. This will enable visitors to enjoy the repaired trails with minimal impact to the forest floor.

### **Upgrading of visitor amenities**

Along with the restoration and repair works, NParks will also use the opportunity to enhance visitor experience by upgrading the more than 20-year old visitor centre. When reopened, it will feature a revamped exhibition area highlighting the habitats and conservation measures carried out at the Reserve. This will allow visitors to better understand and appreciate the importance of this nature reserve. More spacious function rooms will be provided for educational workshops, talks, and outreach activities.

More toilet facilities, wash areas and a kiosk will also be provided.