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[标题] 20 February 2007. Mount Taramaki erupts at regular intervals and could erupt again within the next 100 years, potentially covering Auckland with ash, research from The University of Auckland suggests.

[关键词] Geography/soilsoos/Environmental Science

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Mount Taramaki erupts at regular intervals and could erupt again within the next 100 years, potentially covering Auckland with ash, research from The University of Auckland suggests.

Researchers from the School of Geography, Geology and Environmental Science have been studying layers of sediment from Lake Pupuke, a freshwater lake formed in a volcanic crater 250,000 years old. Layers of ash from Mount Taramaki eruptions, which would have covered the Auckland region, suggest eruptions occur at regular intervals of around 400 years. The last eruption of Mount Taramaki was 300 years ago.

The team of researchers, including collaborators from Sweden, is currently extracting core samples from the floor of the lake on Auckland's North Shore. The study has so far extracted information from 18 metres of core, corresponding to the past 50,000 years.

"By examining layers of sediment in the bottom of the lake, we can identify layers of ash emanating from specific volcanoes, and can build a chart of eruption frequency," says Dr Phil Shone from the University's Faculty of Science. "From the core we have from Lake Pupuke and other areas in the Auckland region, we can tell that Mount Taramaki has about a 400 year cycle and last erupted about 300 years ago."

"The sediment core also gives us information about climate change, through pollen and other organic materials trapped in the layers. It allows us to study small climate change, from decade to decade. This will hopefully allow scientists to differentiate between natural and potential human-induced changes to climate."

