



# Regional Forest Lands Plan

Future Water Collection Areas

Quality for Life



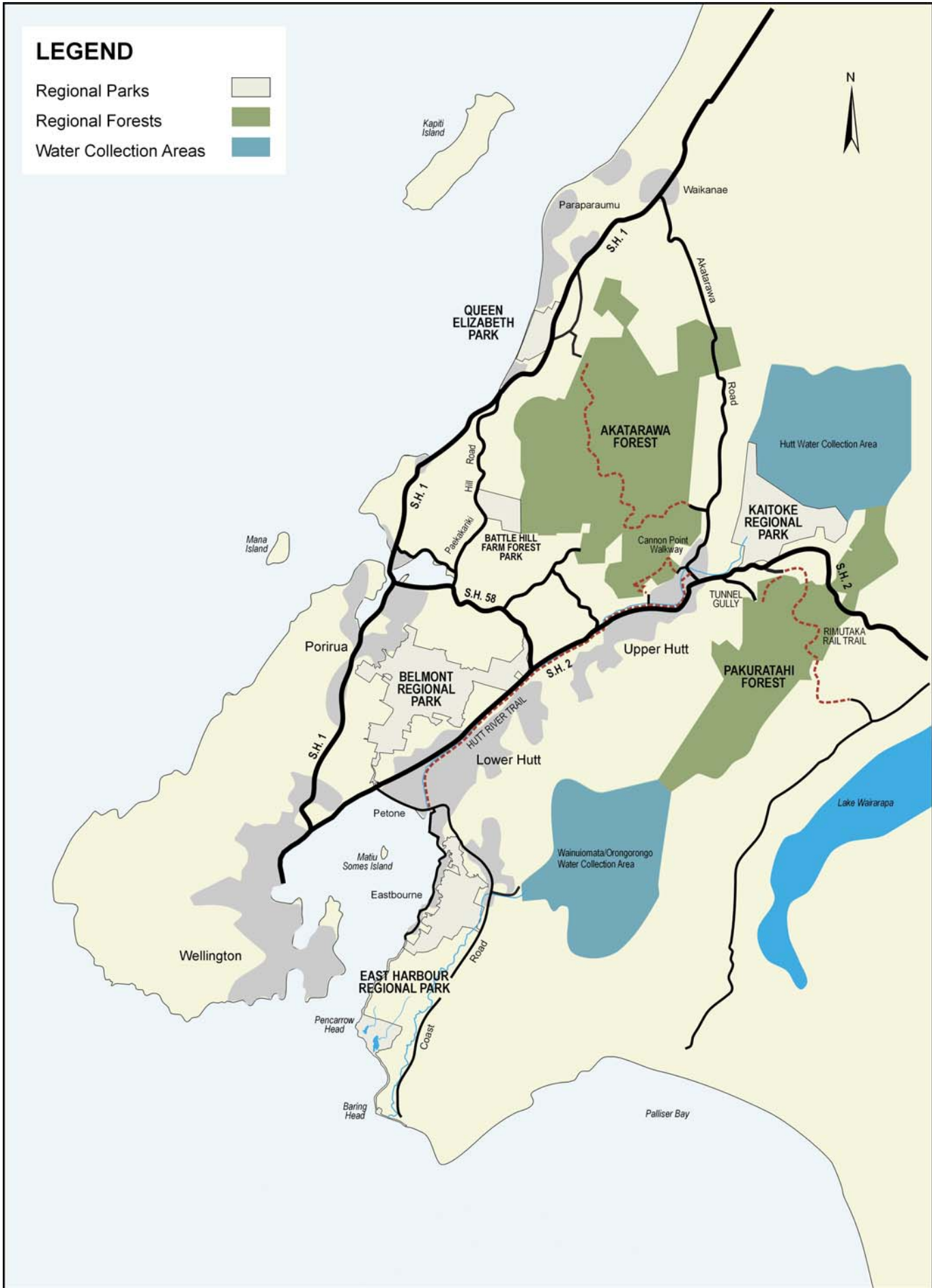
greater WELLINGTON  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Parks  
and Forests



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Map 1: Location of Regional Parks and Forests

## Regional forests - future water collection areas

The Akatarawa and Pakuratahi Forests are potential water sources for the region's future generations<sup>1</sup>. The term "future water collection areas" refers to land held under the Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972 for water supply purposes that are not yet used for water supply. Some land is also held and/or used, for exotic plantation forestry. Full legal descriptions of the land parcels can be found in the appendix.

This plan does not include Greater Wellington forest lands in the Wairarapa. Similarly, the existing water collection lands are not included but are subject to a separate management plan, *Greater Wellington Water Collection Areas Asset Management Plan 2004*.

Greater Wellington's plantation forestry operations, including harvesting, are not covered by this plan. Plantation forestry activities are subject to the provisions of the *Greater Wellington Plantation Forest Working Plan 2000-2010*, approved by full Council in 2003, as well as district and regional plans. However, recreation policies relevant to these plantation lands are included in this plan.

The lands covered in this plan are generally in original or regenerating indigenous vegetation and have important environmental, cultural and heritage values, as well as provide recreation opportunities. Ecosystem benefits are realised through ensuring the health of indigenous biodiversity, managing biosecurity risks and maintaining the integrity of ecosystem processes. Economic benefits are realised through plantation forestry operations, commercial recreation and tourism ventures. However, protecting and sustaining the water resource for future generations is paramount and is achieved by protecting and sustainably managing the forest ecosystems. This plan provides a framework for that management. Maps of each forest area are provided overleaf (Map 1).

### Akatarawa Forest

The Akatarawa Forest lands are situated in moderately steep hill country in the Akatarawa Ranges, located to the west of the Hutt valley and running through to the Kapiti Coast area.



The forest is nearly 15,500ha, which is the largest forest or park managed by Greater Wellington. In terms of the lower North Island, the area's indigenous values are considered to be ecologically significant.

<sup>1</sup> Currently, the Hutt and Wainuiomata/Orongorongo Water Collection Areas are used to meet about 60% of the existing water supply needs for Wellington, Porirua, Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt Cities. The current water collection areas are covered by Greater Wellington Current Water Collection Areas Draft Asset Management Plan. The Waiwhetu aquifer contributes the balance of the water supply to these areas.

Past logging of the podocarps<sup>2</sup> from large areas of the Akatarawa Forest has left a mosaic of forest, bush and shrublands, which provides for a high diversity of bird and insect life. Some 1,000ha of original lowland podocarp forest and 500ha of red beech/miro/rimu forest still remains in parts of the Akatarawa Forest. In addition, small, but significant, stands of the original montane totara/kamaha and miro/kamaha forest remain on high ridges around Mounts Maunganui, Wainui, Titi and Barton. The forest also includes approximately 3,000ha of exotic species, mainly mixed age pine and macrocarpa forest (part of Greater Wellington's plantation forests). There are several wetlands in the Akatarawa and Whakatikei river catchments.

The ecological values are regionally important and include representative examples of original montane and lowland forest associations, including rare ferns, and a rich bird life. All of the region's surviving indigenous bird species are found here, including long tailed cuckoos, tui, whitehead, and New Zealand falcon. Importantly the forest forms links and ecological corridors with other publicly held land in the Akatarawa, Tararua, Rimutaka and Orongorongo Ranges.

Historically, the area was logged for its valuable timber resources including rimu. Old logging tracks and forest logging and milling relics can still be found. The forest is also an important area for mountain biking (including the internationally renowned Karapoti Classic and Challenge mountain bike courses), hunting, motorised recreation and includes the popular Cannon Point Walkway. There is an extensive road network with forestry roads and 4WD tracks, reflecting past and present forestry uses.

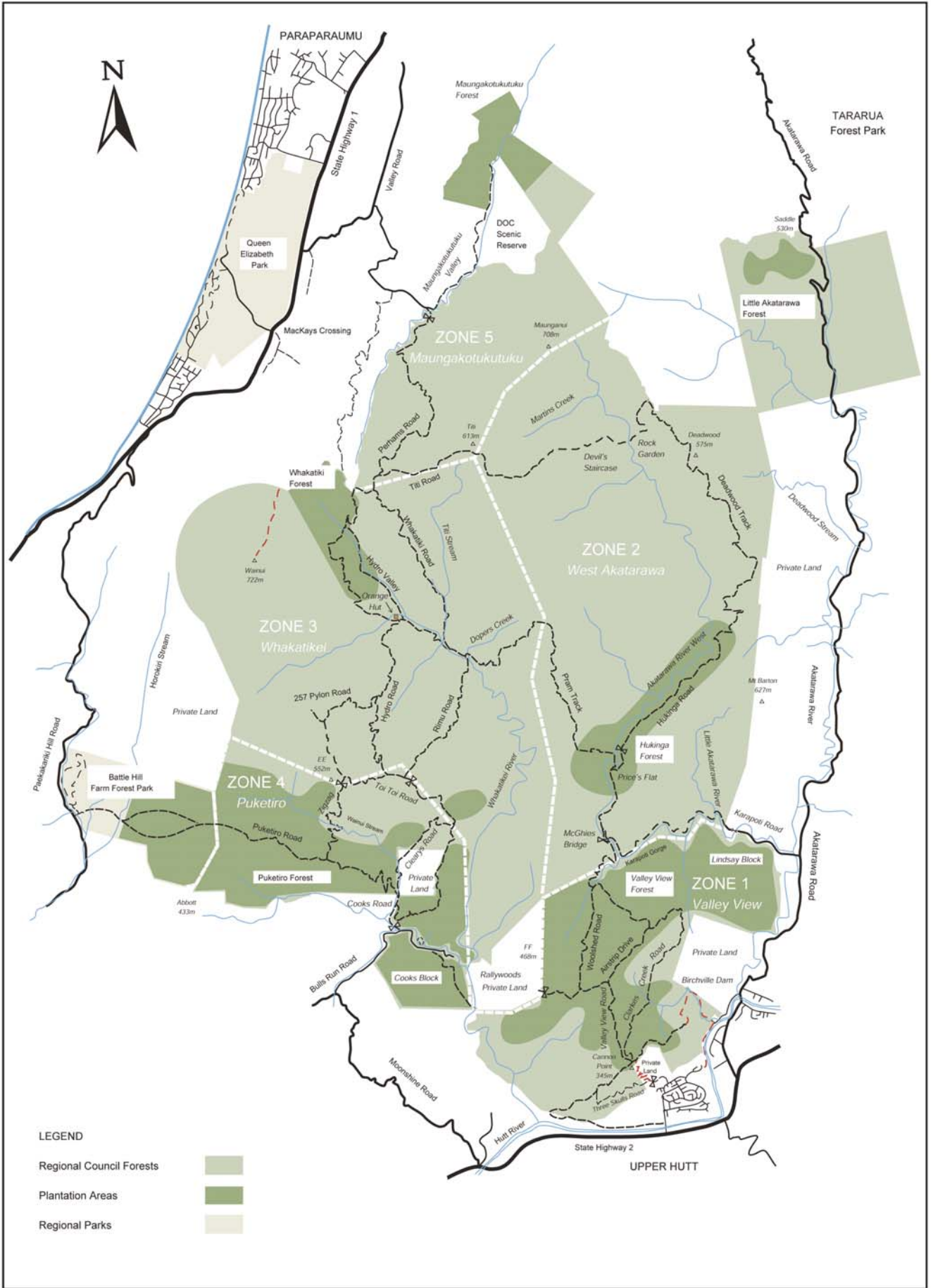
The Akatarawa Forest is managed in zones that roughly mirror the Akatarawa forest catchments (Map 2). These zones are principally used for pest control and asset management purposes. The indigenous areas are managed primarily for environmental, recreational, heritage and cultural values. The Whakatikei, Valley View, Hukinga, Maungakotukutuku, Akatarawa Saddle, and Puketiro blocks are exotic plantation forestry areas that are managed primarily for commercial purposes, but also provide some recreation opportunities.

## Pakuratahi Forest

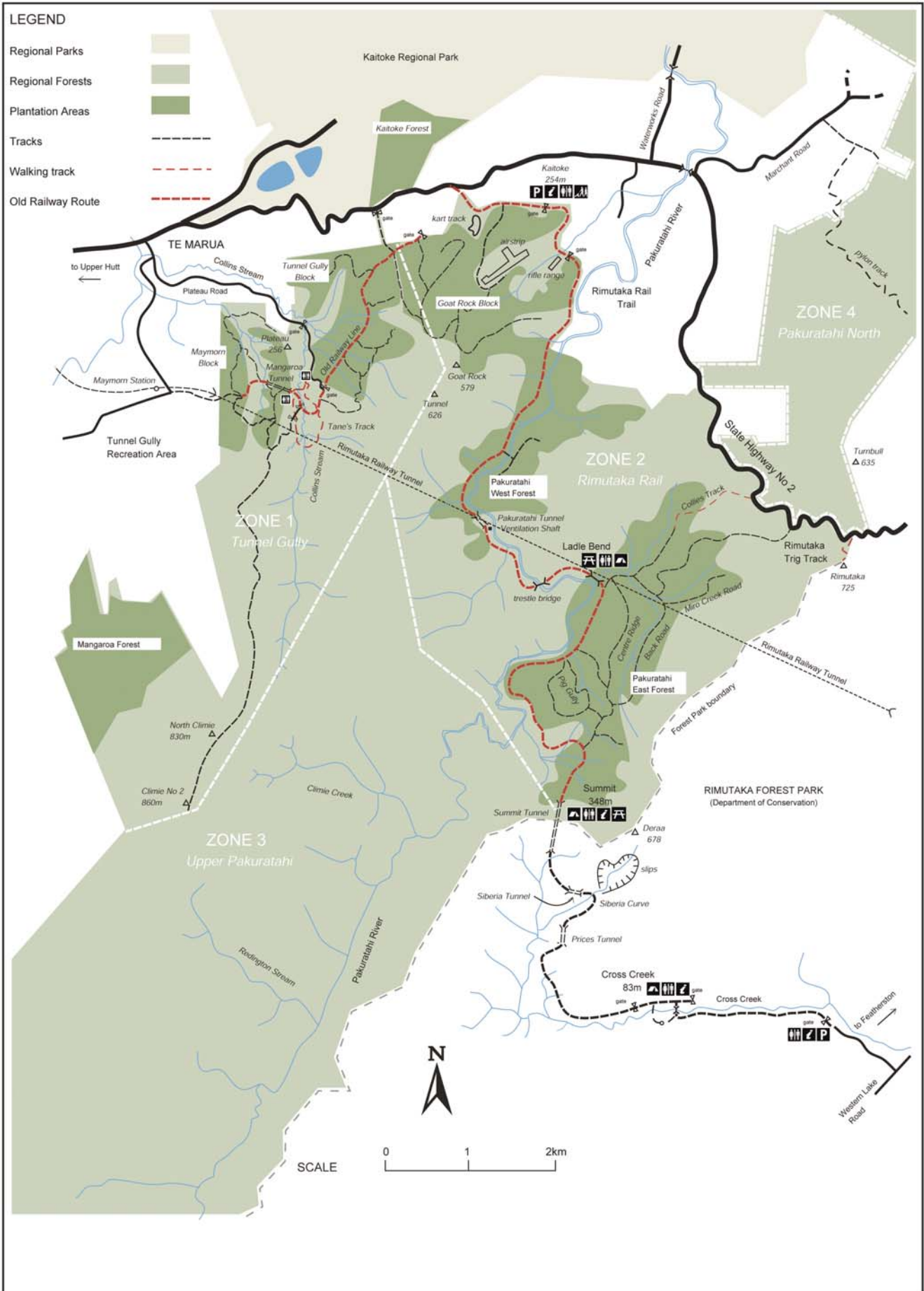
The Pakuratahi Forest (Map 3) covers the western side of the Rimutaka ranges north of Upper Hutt and includes lands in the Kaitoke basin as well as the main Pakuratahi catchment area. At just over 8,000ha this is the smaller of the future water collection areas but forms a contiguous link with the Hutt and Wainuiomata catchments. Unlike the Akatarawa forest, the Pakuratahi is one large catchment and is generally steeper. Exotic plantation stands are found mainly in the northern part of the forest, just south of SH2 (approximately 775ha).

Ecological values include a regionally significant wetland habitat at Ladle Bend. The upper part of the catchment (approximately 3,000ha) contains regionally significant beech stands, and the only snow tussock in the Rimutaka ranges. The forest supports indigenous bird and fish populations including whitehead, rifleman, tomtit, five species of bully, as well as dwarf galaxiid. The forest forms an ecological corridor linking the Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges and kaka have been recorded using this corridor.

<sup>2</sup> 'Podocarps' are tree species that belong to the conifer group of trees and include the tallest native trees, such as kahikatea and matai. However in New Zealand, instead of dry seed cones, many podocarp species produce seeds covered by a fleshy outer skin that looks a bit like a berry. Birds love this 'fruit' and help disperse the seeds around the forest areas.



Map 2: Akatarawa Forest Management Zones



Map 3: Pakuratahi Forest Management Zones



Photos: Jessica Dewsnap

The Pakuratahi Forest has heritage values of national and regional significance as the original railway line formation between Wellington and the Wairarapa runs through the area. The rail formation is registered under the Historic Places Act and is popular for walking and biking. The area is also a popular picnicking spot, with easy access to the sub-alpine environment of Mt Climie. Management is largely the same as the Akatarawa forest with four management zones. Indigenous areas are managed primarily for environmental, recreational, heritage and cultural values, while exotic areas focus on plantation forestry, with some recreation opportunities.

### Greater Wellington Regional Council's role

Greater Wellington has a role in sustainably managing the region's natural resources on behalf of the regional community. This includes managing biodiversity, biosecurity, flood protection, regional parks, plantation forestry, public transport and catchments, as well as providing drinking water for the four metropolitan city councils. The Local Government Act 2002 and the Resource Management Act 1991 are the principal laws governing Greater Wellington and its decision-making processes.

Greater Wellington has a number of plans, documents and strategies directing its management activities. *Towards a Sustainable Region*, the Long Term Council Community Plan, provides strategic direction for Greater Wellington's activities over a ten-year period. Other key strategies, such as the biodiversity programme and the wetlands action plan, influence land management in accordance with the Regional Policy Statement.

Lands under Greater Wellington's control have significant environmental, biodiversity, cultural and heritage values that contribute to the region's unique identity. As a land manager, Greater Wellington is bound by legal and regulatory frameworks governing resource management, including the regional policy statement, regional and district plans, and the regional pest management strategy. The Wellington Water Board Act 1972 enables Greater Wellington to hold and manage lands for water supply purposes, forestry and recreation. This management plan exists within this broader context.



## Plan status

This plan is prepared as a matter of good land management practice, ensuring consistency with other policies, plans and strategies. It represents Greater Wellington's intentions in managing the future water collection area's values when making decisions about land use, development and activities. The objectives and policies must be considered alongside each other when managing competing demands on the land's resources or values, however the ability of these areas to provide water in the future must not be compromised. This is an essential part of making decisions that contribute to a sustainable region.

The plan is 'non-statutory'; there is no legal requirement for Greater Wellington to prepare this plan nor do the provisions have legal standing as regulations. However, many of the policies and objectives do reflect Greater Wellington's legal obligations. These have been included for the sake of clarity and to provide the legal context governing management decisions.

The Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972 sets out Greater Wellington's legal responsibilities and powers over the lands. Greater Wellington officers and rangers are empowered by the Act's bylaws to control activities in the forests. This is the chief regulatory mechanism for implementing the objectives and policies set out in this plan.



This plan does not remove the need for consents or authorisations required by other plans or regulatory frameworks, in particular, the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Historic Places Act 1993. Resource consents may be required to undertake activities within the forests and are required prior to undertaking that activity.

## Water Board Functions Act

In 2005, Parliament passed a Local Bill allowing renewable energy generation to take place on land designated for water catchment or forestry purposes. The Wellington Regional Council (Water Board Functions) Act sits alongside the Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972(WRWBA).

The Act's main points are:

- Any electrical works can be constructed on land held under the WRWBA. Electrical works are defined in the Electricity Act 1992 and have a wide scope.
- The Council can grant easement licences or permits for electrical works without the time constraints of the WRWBA.
- Before allowing any electrical works, the Council has to be satisfied the works will not impede any future water supply activities. The Council though is free to give preference to electricity works over exotic forestry.
- There is full flexibility as to who carries out the electrical works.
- The Act does not affect the provisions in the Resource Management Act 1991.

It is important to note that the Act simply provides the Council with the option of allowing wind turbines but does not direct Council towards any specific decision. Any decision to allow (or not allow) wind turbines will be site specific, and will take into account a range of factors including the economics of any proposal as well as any environmental effects.

Greater Wellington began the process in 2003 and by convention, the electorate Member of Parliament is asked to take charge of the Bill through the Parliamentary process. In this case, the land areas are across several electorates and the Regional Council Centre is in Wellington City. The Hon. Marian Hobbs sponsored the Bill through the process.

The Act proceeded through Parliament according to the normal legislative procedures. Stages included three 'readings' and the Bill was referred to a select committee after the first reading. Submissions were heard by the select committee, before the Bill proceeded to the next reading and eventually became an Act.

### Like to know more?

<http://www.clerk.parliament.govt.nz>

The provisions of this plan will be part of any decision to site, or not site, any wind generation developments within the Akatarawa or Pakuratahi Forests under this Act.

## Purpose

This management plan sets out the future direction for managing Greater Wellington Regional Council's (Greater Wellington) future water collection areas until such time as the lands are required for water collection purposes.

The plan:

- Guides the long-term management of the future water collection areas through the plan's vision, objectives and policies, and
- Represents a common understanding and agreement between Greater Wellington and the regional community about the long-term vision for future water collection areas and how they will be managed.

## How to read this plan

This plan has three parts that are briefly discussed below.

### 1. Introduction

This section provides a brief background to the lands and the plan's scope. Greater Wellington's role and the plan's status are discussed. Finally, Greater Wellington's vision for the lands is provided as a framework for the supporting objectives and policies in the next section.

### 2. Management objectives and policies

Values and factors that influence and direct the area's management are discussed within this section, along with management objectives and policies. The key aspects are:

- Future Water Supply
- Environmental Values
- Landscape and Geological Features
- Cultural Heritage
- Use, Development and Management
- Recreation
- Plantation Forestry
- Communities, Neighbours, and Agencies
- Tangata whenua
- Research, Monitoring and Review

To achieve the vision for the future water collection areas it is important that all of the above objectives and policies are considered when making decisions affecting the areas.

### 3. Implementation, funding and methods

The final section addresses ways in which the plan's vision and policies will be implemented 'on the ground' and identifies other Council processes that contribute to making this plan a reality.

## Vision

Future water collection areas enhance the quality of life in the Wellington region and are places where:

- rivers and streams are healthy and provide fresh, clean water that is secure and sustainable for future generations
- the environment and cultural heritage is protected for current and future generations
- people can enjoy, recreate, use and learn in a sustainable way
- the community is actively involved
- Tangata Whenua interests are respected.

This vision recognises that:

- It is essential to safeguard and protect future generation's water supply and public health needs.
- The best way to safeguard future generation's needs is to maintain/enhance the environment.
- Careful management is required now and in the future, to protect the environment, cultural heritage and current uses, while providing opportunities for community use, enjoyment, and recreation.
- Future water collection areas are part of a regional network, containing resources that are, and will increasingly be, important to the region's sustainability and its people.
- Tangata Whenua maintain strong links with, and interests in, future water collection areas.
- It is important to provide opportunities for people to visit, be involved in, and learn about the future water collection areas.
- Benefits from sustainable commercial activities and uses, such as plantation forestry, commercial recreation and tourism, can be realised if water supply and environmental values are not compromised.





# 1. Future water supply

The Akatarawa and Pakuratahi Forests are primarily held as potential water sources for future generations. Current and future management must not compromise the areas' ability for future water supply purposes. Protecting and sustaining this resource for future generations relies on the ecosystems, and ecosystem processes being protected and managed in a careful way.

Protecting and enhancing indigenous vegetation is a key element of protecting the forests' ecosystems. Vegetation binds the soil, helping maintain the area's physical and ecological integrity that in turn influences water quality, particularly in steep forested areas. Rivers, streams and wetlands directly contribute to water quality and the values of these resources must be maintained, at the very least. In the past, land management focused on water quality values alone. However, an important outcome of that management is the significant contribution that these areas' now make to regional indigenous biodiversity.

Holding the land for future water collection purposes does not preclude the use of these areas but does provide a 'bottom-line' for management. Protecting environmental values through this plan's policies provides that essential bottom line, and requires considering and minimising the effects of management on environmental values. Key considerations addressed elsewhere in this plan include maintaining healthy ecosystems, pests, erosion and pollution, as well as recreation and potential developments. A significant consequence of this management approach is that the value of these lands to the region's biodiversity will also be secured for future generations.

## Primary Objective

The water resource within the future water collection areas is healthy and its potential as a sustainable source of secure, fresh, clean water for the Region in the future is protected.

## Future Water Supply Policies

- 1.1 To manage the future water collection areas to protect their potential as a source of secure, sustainable, fresh, clean water for the Region in the long-term by protecting and enhancing the ecological values of these areas and by avoiding, remedying or mitigating any adverse effects of activities in the water collection areas.
- 1.2 To take into account the potential effect of all proposed operations and activities on the quality and quantity of water available from the future water collection areas for future water supply purposes.

**The above objective and policies require land management practices and decision-making that ensure future generations' needs for clean water are met. The rest of the plan's objectives and policies are subject to this primary objective, while maintaining healthy ecosystem processes and managing the effects of activities are the key means to achieve this objective. In turn, management will also contribute to regional biodiversity, recreation and cultural heritage values.**

## Mount Climie

Mount Climie is a well-known feature in the region, forming part of Upper Hutt's southern and eastern backdrop, as well as the Rimutaka Range skyline seen from Wellington City. Although in the past, parts of the surrounding area have been logged and suffered fire damage, the area has high environmental values. Indigenous biodiversity values can be easily seen from the Mt Climie track that climbs from Tunnel Gully to the Mt Climie tops (3-4 hours return). It is arguably one of the better places to see a montane/ sub-alpine vegetation sequence so close to and accessible from urban areas.

The vegetation changes illustrate the effects of altitude and wind on habitat and plant communities. There is regenerating forest, where most of the canopy consists of tree ferns and broadleaved trees, such as rewarewa. Rimu and rata can also be seen emerging above the canopy. In the colder, wetter areas, which are often under cloud and sometimes snow, red and silver beech are found along with pepper tree, stinkwood, kamahi and fuchsia. At yet higher altitudes, hard beech, Hall's totara and occasionally mountain three finger appear.

Forest snowgrass becomes common in the higher forest openings and ferns are plentiful. Along the open ridge tops, most of the groundcover is a dense thicket of divaricating shrubs, *Astelia* species and snow grasses. Scattered beech can still be seen as evidence of the original vegetation destroyed in the early twentieth century by fire. This type of alpine community is uncommon in the region and rare species such as *Brachyglottis kirkii* and *Pittosporum rigidum* have been recorded here. South of Mt Climie at spot height 862, there is an area of true snow tussock, the only snow tussock in the Rimutaka Range.



## 2. Environmental values

New Zealand is one of the world's 25 biodiversity "hotspots". Since people's arrival in New Zealand, there has been a drastic reduction in the biodiversity of indigenous species and ecosystems. Only 25% of the nation's original forest cover remains. Ecosystems have become fragmented and isolated. The challenges are now to 'halt the decline', preventing further losses of the region's biodiversity, and minimising the adverse impacts of our activities on the environment. Key threats to biodiversity are habitat loss, fragmentation, development and pests<sup>3</sup>.

The Akatarawa and Pakuratahi forests' environmental values are high, with regionally significant forest and wetland habitats. Indigenous vegetation, which makes up over 80% of the total area, and the largely undeveloped upper catchment areas provide excellent habitat for native insects, birds, lizards and fish. Regionally representative examples of podocarp, broadleaf and beech forest types are found in both the Akatarawa and Pakuratahi forests, greatly adding to the region's biodiversity. In addition, the forests' scale and size lend resilience to the indigenous ecosystems, which is an essential part of maintaining biodiversity.

The Akatarawa and Pakuratahi forests form, with other public lands, a nearly contiguous indigenous band linking the Akatarawa, Tararua, Rimutaka, and Orongorongo ranges. These large areas of indigenous habitat are an important refuge for the region's remaining native fauna and are key sites for protecting biodiversity<sup>4</sup>. Significant environmental areas and features in the future water collection areas are identified in Table 1 and Map 4.



Creeping clubmoss



Easter orchid

The Akatarawa Forest is a large forested area, significant ecologically in the lower North Island. It is particularly rich in native ferns. Although parts of it have been logged, there are still areas of bush in its original state supporting kamahi, rimu, hinau, rata (both northern and southern) and beech forests. Higher up in the forest are plants not found growing at lower altitudes including mountain cabbage tree (*Cordyline indivisa*), stinkwood (*Coprosma foetidissima*), as well as the ferns *Blechnum nigrum*, and Prince of Wales Feathers (*Leptopteris superba*). The presence of the regionally critical plants such as Kirks tree daisy and the ferns *Trichomanes colensoi* and *Hymenophyllum atrovirens* make this an important botanical area in a regional context.

<sup>3</sup> New Zealand's Biodiversity Strategy, 1998

<sup>4</sup> Stephens R.T.T., Brown D.J. & Thornley N.J. 2002. Measuring conservation achievement: concepts and their application over the Twizel area. *Science for Conservation* 2002:114pp.



The Pakuratahi Forest forms part of a continuous belt of forest running north east from the Rimutaka to the Tararua Forest Park and is therefore an important ecological corridor. The area contains a mix of forest types including lowland to montane ecotypes. In the lower areas there are podocarps such as rimu with tawa forests in the valleys. Beech associations, both hard and silver, are mixed with hardwood species, such as kamahi, as you climb towards the ridges. All four species of beech are found in the area. At the higher altitudes, open areas have montane vegetation such as tussocks, and wetlands, bogs and seeps. Notable elements of the flora include *Pittosporum cornifolium* (an epiphyte), which is regionally sparse.

Exotic and indigenous areas within the forests influence each other. Catchment areas are shared; a river or stream may run through both indigenous and exotic forests before making its way to the sea. Recreation occurs across the forests and management activities in one area can impact on the other, for instance, road and track use. Although, the purpose of exotic and indigenous management is quite different<sup>5</sup>, some management functions share the same aims including maintaining water quality, soil conservation, providing recreational access and considering adjacent forest values. Benefits accrue to plantation forestry from a healthy indigenous ecosystem limiting potentially devastating insect and fungal attacks on trees, while logging tracks provide additional access and recreational opportunities for the community.



Protecting environmental values and ‘halting the decline’ requires carefully managing pests, hazards and people within the forests. Pests destroy indigenous habitat and ultimately contribute to biodiversity decline. Possums, deer, goats, rats and mustelids, if left unchecked, weaken indigenous ecosystems’ ability to function as a result of excessive browsing pressures. Old mans beard, Japanese honeysuckle and alder smother and displace native vegetation. Natural hazards, such as fire and erosion, can destroy habitats, as well as plant and animal communities. Perhaps one of the most significant challenges facing the forests’ biodiversity is people’s behaviour. Management actions, park developments, inappropriate activities or overuse can pose a threat to ecosystems, by disturbing habitats or species, reducing soil or water quality, or fragmenting habitats.

<sup>5</sup>Plantation areas are managed on a commercial basis compared to the indigenous areas that are managed for ecological, recreational and cultural values

## Threatened species

In 2002, the Department of Conservation introduced a new system for classifying native species at risk or threatened with extinction. Government policy since the release of the Biodiversity Strategy is to prevent further losses in New Zealand's biodiversity or 'halt the decline'. The 'New Zealand Threat Classification Systems lists produced in 2002 help the Department of Conservation and other managers of indigenous biodiversity like Greater Wellington to understand the threats, prioritise and manage their land wisely.

The current classifications are

### **Acutely threatened**

- Nationally critical
- Nationally endangered
- Nationally vulnerable

### **Chronically threatened**

- Serious decline
- Gradual decline

### **At risk**

- Range restricted
- Sparse

### **Like to know more?**

See the "Classifying Species According to Threat of Extinction" or [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz) or

"New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy" or [www.biodiversity.govt.nz](http://www.biodiversity.govt.nz)

### Environmental Objectives

1. Indigenous habitats and ecosystems in the future water collection areas;
  - are protected and enhanced; and
  - are healthy and their life supporting capacity is sustained; and
  - contribute to the region's good quality water, air, and soil and enhanced biodiversity
2. Future water collection areas provide examples of best environmental practice for the community.

### Environmental Policies

#### Ecosystem

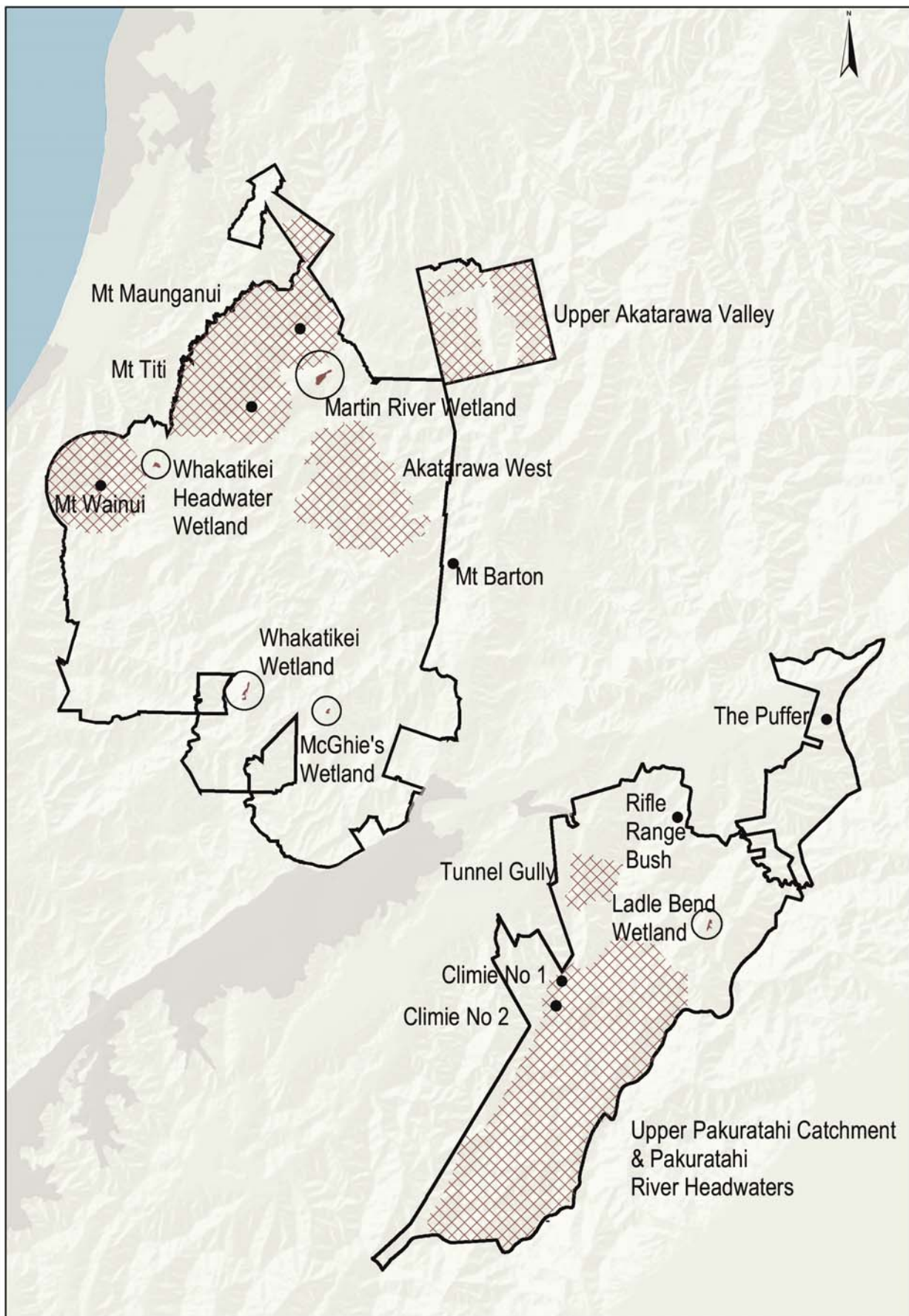
- 2.1 To protect the significant areas and features listed in Table 1 and any additional areas based on an assessment of the following matters;
  - the degree of threat
  - the contribution to regional indigenous biodiversity, including representativeness
  - the degree of rareness and/or vulnerability
  - the presence of vulnerable or unique species, populations of species known or likely to be of value as a genetic resource, an unusually high diversity of indigenous species, unique or unusual geological features, or spiritual values
  - the integrity of ecosystem processes
  - the degree of public support

Table 1: Significant Indigenous Environmental Areas and Features\*

Area	Description	Reasons for Significance
General	Indigenous bird and fish habitat	Threatened species: Kaka (nationally endangered); NZ falcon (nationally vulnerable); kereru (gradual decline); yellow crowned kākāriki (gradual decline); long finned eel (gradual decline); giant kokopu (gradual decline); dwarf galaxiids (gradual decline)
Akatarawa Forest		
Mt Wainui	Lowland to montane miro-rimu/kamaha forest on lower hillslopes; montane halls totara – kamaha forest on upper hill slopes	Regional example of montane miro-kamaha forest, contains rare ferns and original pre-European forest types for the area. Relatively unmodified on upper slopes. Snow grass species are found at the summit. BRWR, (17a) <sup>6</sup> . Also identified in KCDC's District plan's heritage section <sup>7</sup> . <i>Adiantum fulvum</i> (regionally sparse); <i>Adiantum viridescens</i> (regionally sparse); <i>Streblus banksii</i> (nationally sparse)
Mt Barton, Maunganui, Titi and Wainui Summits	Hillslopes & summits: Montane miro-kamaha forest. Main ridges: Montane Halls totara – kamaha forest.	Representative examples of montane podocarp – broadleaved forest types, little modified from pre-European times. BRWR, (18a) <sup>6</sup> . Hall's totara-kamaha forest occurs on only two peaks in the region, Mt Wainui and Maunganui. Also identified in KCDC's District plan's heritage section <sup>7</sup> .
Upper Akatarawa Valley	Lowland to montane red beech/rimu/kamaha forest and rimu/rata/hinau/kamaha forest. Lowland podocarp/kamaha forest; lowland to montane hard beech forest; montane kamaha forest	One of few remaining large areas of accessible and reasonably unmodified native forest. Contains excellent stands of Hall's totara. High scenic and recreational value. Important habitat and natural corridor values. BRWR, 1984 (19a, b) <sup>6</sup> . Also identified in KCDC's District plan's heritage section <sup>7</sup> . Significant species: <i>Brachyglottis kirkii var kirkii</i> – Kirks Tree Daisy (nationally serious decline, regionally critical); <i>Drucella integrastipula</i> (a threatened liverwort only known from a handful of sites in NZ); <i>Trichomanes strictum</i> – fern (nationally sparse, regionally data deficient); <i>Trichomanes colensoi</i> – fern (nationally sparse, regionally critical); <i>Trichomanes elongatum</i> – fern (regionally critical), <i>Grammitis pseudociliata</i> – strap fern (regionally deficient data); <i>Hymenophyllum atrovirens</i> (nationally sparse, regionally critical)

\* Areas are based on best available information to date and are subject to revision and change

<sup>6</sup>BRWR: Biological Resources of the Wellington Region (Wellington Regional Council 1984)<sup>7</sup>Kapiti Coast District Council District Plan



Map 4: Significant Indigenous Environmental Areas and Features  
Areas identified above may be subject to revision

\*Areas identified above may be subject to revision

Table 1: Significant Indigenous Environmental Areas and Features\* cont.

Area	Description	Reasons for Significance
Akatarawa Forest cont.		
Akatarawa West Deep Creek Plateau	Unmodified red beech forest with some podocarp forest to the north	In the 1980's, this area was recommended to become a formally recognised as a conservation area. Kakariki are present in numbers.
Draper's Flat Martin's River Whakatikei Headwaters Valley View	Raupo wetland Kahikatea swamp Kahikatea, sphagnum moss Manuka, sphagnum moss	Akatarawa wetlands: These wetlands all provide important examples of threatened wetland ecosystems <sup>9</sup> .
Pakuratahi Forest		
Climie Peaks No 1 & 2	Montane/ sub-alpine vegetation, only snow tussock in the Rimutaka Range at spot height 826	The area contains <i>Pittosporum rigidum</i> ; <i>Brachyglottis kirkii var kirkii</i> – Kirks Tree Daisy (nationally serious decline, regionally critical); <i>Pimelia gnidia</i> (regionally data deficient); <i>Lycopodiella lateris</i> (regionally data deficient, only site in the lower North Island); <i>Astelia aff nervosa</i> (un-described species)
Tunnel Gully	Lowland forest vegetation, podocarp/ beech/hardwood	Area contains swamp maire, large stands of terrestrial rata, has high scenic and recreation values. <i>Pittosporum cornifolium</i> (regionally sparse) and <i>Metrosideros robusta</i> (northern rata) are also found here.
Upper Pakuratahi Catchment	Extensive beech forests	Extensive mixed beech forests including the southern limit of red beech in the North Island. Recommended by PASAC <sup>8</sup> for protection as an extension to the Bawbaw Ecological Area 1985. Also identified as a SSWI for its significant wildlife values, BRWR (38b) <sup>6</sup>
Pakuratahi Rivers Headwaters	Montane to sub-alpine red beech/silver beech forest. Rimu/miro/silver beech forest; silver beech forest	Southern limit of red beech in the North Island. Contains northern rata and is relatively unmodified. BRWR (38a) <sup>6</sup>
Pakuratahi Ladle Bend Wetland	Manuka wetland	This wetland is regionally significant in terms of habitat type <sup>9</sup> .
The Puffer, Tararua Forest Park	Various ferns and orchids	The area is nationally recognised for the diversity of orchid species and contains regionally rare ferns and orchids. <i>Brachyglottis kirkii var kirkii</i> – Kirks Tree Daisy (nationally serious decline, regional critical); <i>Pterostylis cardiostigma</i> (regionally sparse); <i>Pterostylis tasmanica</i> (nationally serious decline)
Rifle Range Bush	podocarp/hardwood/ hard beech	Significant remnant containing maire tawake (swamp maire), now much depleted in the area

<sup>8</sup>PASAC stands for the Protected Areas Scientific Advisory Committee, a group of interdisciplinary scientists set up to designate important ecological sites across the country as protected areas.

<sup>9</sup>Wetland Action Plan, 2003, Greater Wellington Regional Council

*Ecosystems Policies cont.*

- 2.2 To enhance ecosystems or habitats that are:
- degraded; and
  - have one or more of the following criteria:
    - are representative of the region’s indigenous biodiversity; or
    - are regionally or nationally rare or vulnerable; or
    - have special features such as the presence of vulnerable or unique species, populations of species known or likely to be of value as a genetic resource, an unusually high diversity of indigenous species, unique or unusual geological features, or spiritual values; or
    - have the potential to be significant areas of indigenous vegetation or significant habitats of indigenous fauna; or
    - are supported by the public or by community groups wishing to restore an area
- 2.3 To base the nature and level of protection or enhancement of ecosystems on;
- the ecosystem’s values;
  - the ecosystem’s ability to restore itself or resilience; and
  - the other key values of the area, including water supply and recreational values.
- 2.4 To consider, when assessing and implementing restoration projects;
- making provision for species that have social or cultural values, such as medicinal uses, weaving, or plants significant to Tangata Whenua
  - forming or contributing to ecological corridors or linkages
  - involving the public and gaining support of communities to implement projects

**Freshwater Management**

- 2.5 To maintain aquatic ecosystem values by:
- applying the preceding ‘ecosystem’ policies
  - implementing recommendations from Greater Wellington’s Riparian Management Strategy and Wetlands Action Plan
  - ensuring management or recreational activities do not adversely affect waterways in the long term
  - ensuring fish passage is not impeded when constructing tracks or culverts
  - constructing fish passages, where required
- 2.6 To minimise threats to the water quality and quantity in streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands by:
- not allowing activities that compromise the ability of freshwater systems to function or impede the potential as a source of secure, sustainable, fresh, clean water for the region
  - managing and/or restoring riparian areas to minimise erosion and sediment discharges

## Land Management

- 2.7 To allow natural regeneration, without intervention, where there is a local seed source and the ecosystem has the capacity to restore itself.
- 2.8 To use plants eco-sourced<sup>10</sup> from within the future water collection areas, where possible.
- 2.9 To plant non-native plants<sup>11</sup> only where;
- there is a specific purpose or amenity value in accordance with an area's management objectives, for instance, plantation forestry; and
  - the area has low indigenous ecological values; and
  - they pose a known low threat to indigenous ecosystems.
- 2.10 To remove existing non-native plants from indigenous areas and subject to pest management policies, except where they:
- have historical or cultural significance; or
  - act as a "nurse crop" for native species; or
  - have a high amenity value; or
  - are necessary for viable plantation forestry activities; or
  - provide other important functions, such as erosion control or protect cultural heritage features.

## Pest Plants and Animals

- 2.11 To manage pest plants and animals in a way that allows indigenous ecosystems to recover and halts biodiversity decline.
- 2.12 To base pest plant and animal control programmes on the<sup>12</sup>:
- vulnerability and ecological value of the ecosystem under threat;
  - nature and extent of the threat posed to ecological health and biodiversity;
  - distribution and size of the pest population;
  - the most efficient and cost effective techniques available;
  - an assessment of any adverse effects on non-target species, the environment and human health; and
  - the Regional Pest Management Strategy.
- 2.13 To provide additional levels of pest management in specified areas, if required, to protect sites or features of significant ecological value.
- 2.14 To take all practical steps to prevent new pest infestations or re-infestations, including preparing additional management plans, if required.
- 2.15 To be a good neighbour by notifying owners and managers of adjoining land about pest management likely to affect them and liaising with them on pest control.

<sup>10</sup> Greater Wellington adopted a policy of eco-sourcing plants from the ecological region in 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Non-native plants are those that do not naturally occur in a particular area. This can include plants from other countries and plants from other areas in New Zealand. For example, Pohutukawa are native to the northern areas of the North Island but not to Wellington.

<sup>12</sup> Refer Parks and Forests Environmental Asset Management System.



Environmental values are fundamental to these lands' uniqueness and suitability as future water collection areas. The forests form a recognisably distinct part of the regional identity and provide opportunities for people to experience being within an indigenous forest relatively easily. Protecting the forest's environmental values means taking into account land and freshwater ecosystem processes and managing the threat of pests to ecosystem health. Environmental health and biodiversity are an important part of the region's legacy for future generations.

Managing the forest areas in accordance with the above objectives and policies will ensure the forest's ecological health and resilience extends into the future. Biodiversity is a key indicator of ecosystem health and these policies should ensure that any biodiversity decline is halted. Maintaining the indigenous biodiversity is important for these areas, as well as biodiversity in the Akatarawa, Tararua, Rimutaka and Orongorongo ranges.

### Indigenous Fish

Fish species native to New Zealand's rivers are not as well known to many people as introduced species, like salmon or trout. There are 22 native fish species in the region, of which 11 can be found in the forested hill catchments of the Pakuratahi and Akatarawa Forests.

Generally native species in this type of environment tend to be solitary, shy and nocturnal, so can be difficult to see. Most fish species spend at least some time at sea during their lifecycle, with the remaining time in freshwater, spawning near stream margins. Some species are also excellent climbers, making their way over waterfalls into the higher catchment areas. Native fish prefer catchments with native vegetation rather than pasture, making forests like these increasingly important for protecting indigenous freshwater biodiversity.

Although many people enjoy a feed of whitebait, the adult fish that make up 'whitebait' when grown are rarely noticed in their native habitats. Whitebait are actually members of the Galaxiidae family and include inanga, koaro, banded kokopu, giant kokopu and short-jawed kokopu.

Koaro and banded kokopu are found in both forests. Giant kokopu is found in the Akatarawa Forest, while another member of the Galaxiidae family, dwarf galaxias, are found in the Pakuratahi forest. Both of these two species are now considered to be threatened and are classified as being in gradual decline. Redfin bullies are the most common fish found within the forests but common, bluegill and Cran's bullies are also present, while in the Pakuratahi Forest upland bullies have also been found.

Eels both long and short finned are found in the forests as well. Long finned eels are amongst the largest freshwater eels in the world and are found only here in New Zealand. They are long lived fish that can be as old as 60 years. These fish mostly hunt by night with their sense of smell, rather than eyesight. Unfortunately, these species are not as common as they once were and are now considered threatened, with populations in gradual decline.

### 3. Landscape and geological features

In physical terms, landscape is a combination of landform, land cover and land use. Landform is the soil and rocks shaped by geological processes and the effects of water and wind over time. It is the shape of the land, and includes the water that moves across or lies on the surface such as rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands. Geology is essentially the composition, structure and origin of rock formations. Geological features have scientific, educational and aesthetic values.

Human activities and use may leave marks on the land, from the small and temporary, to the large and long lasting. Landscape is therefore also about people and their stories; it has aesthetic, cultural and personal values that influence people's experience within an environment. For Tangata Whenua, the land and the landscape represent many things including ancestors and their activities, history and genealogy.

The future water collection areas are part of the Akatarawa and Rimutaka Ranges. These ranges form one of the five broad landscape areas within the region that contribute to the region's unique natural character. In particular, the area's indigenous forests and the montane grasslands form a large part of the backdrop surrounding the Wellington, Kapiti and Hutt metropolitan areas. The forests provide settings that people can enjoy for recreation as a contrast to and relief from the pressures of modern urban life, adding to the community's quality of life.

Activities and development, such as, subdivision, land clearance, and roading have the potential to damage or adversely change landscape and geological values and/or cause erosion. To ensure these values are not destroyed, change should be guided to sustain the quality of landscape and geological features within the forests. This requires protecting and conserving representative samples of the region's natural landscapes that contribute to the region's landscape quality and diversity. Recognising and protecting geological features assists the community to understand the region's unique geological history and influences on landform, flora and fauna.



## Landscape values and geological features objectives

- 3.1 The essential landscape character and values, and the significant geological features of the future water collection areas are recognised and protected.
- 3.2 Specific landscapes of particular significance to Tangata Whenua within future water collection areas are acknowledged and protected.

## Landscape values and geological features policies

- 3.1 To protect the essential landscape character and values by:
  - maintaining a diverse range of distinctive landscapes and settings, including dominant landscape features, within the forests, as well as those values appreciated from outside the forests
  - protecting areas of particular significance to Tangata Whenua from inappropriate use or development
  - maintaining significant modified landscapes or features, such as the Rimutaka rail formation, and logging tram ways, where appropriate
  - protecting key landscape features and values from inappropriate use and development
  - applying policies for ‘assessing activities and uses’ to address effects on landscape values
  - ensuring any adverse effects from developments or activities on landscape values, including cultural values, are avoided or minimised
  - managing the scale of any development so it is appropriate to its setting
  - ensuring any tracks or access ways are constructed to minimise visual effects on landforms.
- 3.2 Key landscape features and values are:
  - the steep forested valleys and crest of hilltops in the Akatarawa Forest
  - the backdrop of Mt Wainui to the Kapiti Coast
  - the Mt Climie ridgeline as the backdrop to Upper Hutt City and northern skyline of Wellington City
  - the Rimutaka rail formation
  - areas of the Pakuratahi Forest visible from SH2
  - upper Pakuratahi valley’s character as a remote wilderness area that is largely unmodified.
- 3.3 To protect geological features and soil resources by:
  - identifying and prioritising key geological features
  - applying policies for ‘assessing activities and uses’ to address effects on geological features
  - ensuring any adverse effects from developments or activities on geological features, including cultural values, are avoided or minimised

- using appropriate methods to minimise erosion, such as riparian planting, assessing alternative sites for activities or developments, while taking into account environmental considerations
- minimising the use of any chemicals necessary for land management.

Assessing activities and future development against these objectives and policies is the principal way that landscape values will be managed in the forests. The expected result is that the essential character of landscape values, and geological features of the future water collection areas will be retained. The lands will continue to provide an environment that contributes to the regional identity and distinctive sense of place. People will continue to enjoy the landscape values and natural heritage when using these areas for recreation, which in turn contributes to the health and well being of the regional community.



## Rimutaka Railway

The original Rimutaka railway was constructed during the 1870s between Wellington and the Wairarapa. Heritage features of the former railway are now classed as regionally, nationally and internationally significant. The Rimutaka Incline was a particularly steep section of the route on the Wairarapa side before the summit, with a gradient of up to 1 in 14. Special Fell engines used a third rail and horizontal wheel system to aid traction up the Incline and to brake coming down. At the time of closure in 1955, the Incline had become the world's longest-running and the last Fell railway. The incline can still be seen at the Rimutaka Forest Park, managed by the Department of Conservation (DoC). As the rail formation pre-dates 1900, it is automatically protected as an archaeological site under the Historic Places Act 1993.

In 2002, the New Zealand Historic Places Trust recognised 16km of the railway formation from Kaitoke to Cross Creek as an Historic Area. While the old Kaitoke Station is on private land, the section from State Highway 2 to Summit Tunnel is part of the Pakuratahi Forest, managed by the Greater Wellington Regional Council. DoC manages the Incline, from the southern end of Summit Tunnel to Cross Creek. The two agencies co-operate to resolve maintenance issues.

There are numerous railway heritage features, including bridges, culverts, embankments and tunnels within the Pakuratahi Forest. They are listed in the Upper Hutt District Plan as significant heritage items, and require resource consents for works affecting them. A conservation plan to guide management was prepared in 1999 for the structures on Greater Wellington lands.

Today the formation is managed as part of the Rimutaka Rail Trail, a joint venture between Greater Wellington and DoC, opened in 1987 by the Governor General. At the old Summit yard there are photos and stories from people that lived in the settlement describing what life was like. Sound recordings of the Fell engines also exist, as well as oral histories and photos held at the Alexander Turnbull Library. The trail is a notable feature of the Pakuratahi Forest and is a popular recreation route used by more than 30,000 walkers, runners and cyclists each year.

The Fell Museum at Featherston has excellent displays on the Upper Hutt-Featherston railway, including Incline photographs and artefacts, and a restored Fell locomotive (the only one remaining in the world) and brakevan.



View of Wairarapa railway line. W Class train with sheep trucks seen passing round Ladle Bend ca1880s (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z.)



S class locomotive and train at the Rimutaka Summit. The group by the train includes Guard J Turner and signalman M Cronin 1880s-1890s. (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z.)

## 4. Cultural heritage

Cultural heritage is the living historical record that includes landscapes, important moments in communities, peoples, tribes or the nation's development, as well as people's stories and connections with 'place'. Cultural heritage conservation is more than just protecting historic places, buildings or structures. It is a dynamic process keeping alive peoples' association with place, as well as protecting specific sites and structures.

Heritage is diverse and may have tangible and /or intangible aspects. Tangible heritage includes land, landforms, buildings, structures and archaeological sites. Natural features such as springs, swamps and streams may also be associated with traditional activities or have particular historical or cultural significance. Intangible heritage includes stories, sites of significance and associations with place.

Archaeological sites are places associated with human activity before 1900, where there may be evidence relating to New Zealand history. Sites include pa sites, cultivation areas and gardens, middens, rock art sites, trading, or mining sites. In many instances physical evidence may not be obvious. Architectural or built heritage includes buildings, marae, houses, bridges and dams. Any heritage type may be considered to be wahi tapu (sacred places) or wahi taonga (treasures) for Iwi, Hapu or Whanau based on their tikanga.

All recorded and known archaeological sites dated before 1900 are protected by the Historic Places Act 1993. An authority from the Historic Places Trust is required to destroy, damage or modify any archaeological site. Wahi tapu are also protected under this Act. Protection for other historical sites may also be offered by city, district or regional plans. Tangata Whenua cultural heritage is also protected as a "matter of national importance" under section 6(e) of the Resource Management Act 1991.

One of the key challenges in protecting cultural heritage values is identifying the values that still exist. Heritage values must first be assessed and recorded and then protected from physical damage, for instance, vandalism, animal browsing or land disturbance. Where features can't be maintained, for example through erosion, information can still be collected.

The Akatarawa and Pakuratahi have rich histories for Maori and European. Both forests were an important resource to early European settler communities providing timber, farm supplies, water and transport routes. Small communities were present in each of the forests and evidence of them can still be seen. Extensive tramways, which were used for logging, can be found in the Akatarawa forest, along with old hut sites and abandoned machinery. The more famous heritage sites are those connected to the original Rimutaka railway in the Pakuratahi Forest.

Currently, Greater Wellington has conservation plans for some heritage structures, but not for archaeological sites or heritage areas. The framework for conservation of heritage buildings is the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value. Greater Wellington's policies and practices are based on this Charter. Greater Wellington will work with Tangata Whenua to ensure that areas and values of significance to Tangata Whenua are appropriately protected. Cultural heritage management involves Tangata Whenua as kaitiaki or guardians of their own cultural heritage, according to tikanga (custom).

## Cultural Heritage Objectives

1. Significant cultural heritage values and features in the future water collection areas are identified, protected and interpreted, presented and promoted to the community.
2. Knowledge, history and stories relating to cultural heritage values and features in the future water collection areas are preserved.
3. Tangata Whenua are appropriately involved in the management of their cultural heritage.
4. The community understands and appreciates the future water collection areas' significant cultural heritage values and features.
5. The community is involved in heritage management, and the future water collection areas contribute to the community's sense of place in the Region

## Cultural Heritage Policies

- 4.1 To protect a representative range of significant cultural heritage features, post 1900, according to the policies below<sup>13</sup>.
- 4.2 To manage sites of significance to Tangata Whenua in consultation with Tangata Whenua, and according to nationally and locally established protocols.
- 4.3 To manage historic and cultural heritage features based on significance and the level of threat.
- 4.4 To ensure assessments of "significance" include:
  - Age, rarity, and representativeness.
  - The nature and level of information available about the features and/or associated values.
  - Cultural, educational, and scientific values.
  - Whether features are collective, i.e. encompass a number of heritage features or values.

<sup>13</sup> Heritage features that date before 1900 are protected as archaeological site under the Historic Places Act 1993.

- 4.5 To adhere to nationally established procedures when historic and cultural heritage features are unearthed
- 4.6 To develop conservation plans for significant cultural heritage features, as appropriate.
- 4.7 To restore or enhance degraded cultural heritage features, where possible and appropriate.
- 4.8 To identify, protect and preserve information and knowledge related to significant cultural heritage values and features<sup>14</sup>:
- According to national standards and Tangata Whenua tikanga.
  - Having appropriate regard to relevant privacy issues and cultural requirements.
- 4.9 To present and interpret significant cultural heritage values and features to the community, except:
- Where the cultural heritage features may be at risk from damage or vandalism through increased knowledge or access.
  - Where the cultural heritage features may be in particularly sensitive areas such as gravesites or wahi tapu, for which greater information and public access could degrade the area physically or spiritually.
  - Where the health and safety of people would be put at risk through an increased knowledge of, or access to, cultural heritage features, e.g. in areas where logging operations are taking place.
- 4.10 To work with iwi, community groups and historical societies to identify, assess and appropriately interpret historical and cultural heritage features.
- 4.11 To encourage a greater awareness within the community of the range and significance of cultural heritage values and features.
- 4.12 To protect the historic Rimutaka Railway formation and any associated historic structures.
- 4.13 To protect the Birchville Dam, historic tramways and any associated historic logging structures in the Akatarawa forest.

**The region's cultural heritage is a vital component of regional identity and central to many people's sense of place. Preserving knowledge and physical artefacts, as well as sharing this through interpretation panels on site and brochures are the main methods used to achieve this in the forest lands. Although difficult to measure, increasing people's knowledge and appreciation of cultural heritage values are the most important outcome sought from this section's objectives and policies.**

<sup>14</sup> For the purposes of this section on cultural heritage, "feature" includes cultural heritage sites, areas and individual structures.





## 5. Use, development and management

Future water collection areas provide a wide range of opportunities, in addition to water supply and plantation forestry functions. Changes in society influence the use of and demand for the future water collection areas, while increasing urbanisation and development results in natural places becoming scarcer. The challenge is managing recreational, community and commercial uses while protecting the future water supply, environmental and cultural heritage values.

Predicted population changes in the next ten years are expected to be moderate and should not place undue stress on the parks and forests network, beyond what is currently experienced. However, the growth in some activities may result in greater impact and development in areas, for instance, motorised recreation, mountain-biking or large events. Currently, the most common uses are recreation, hunting, sporting and community events, environmental education, commercial enterprises, customary use and tourism. Over recent years filming has increased as a commercial activity.

Greater Wellington encourages activities and uses that are sustainable or contribute to a sustainable region. Where environmental or heritage values are high, areas will be managed primarily to protect those values, and social and economic activities will be more constrained. Where environmental and heritage values are lower, areas will be managed primarily for sustainable use, and social and economic activities may be less constrained.

This management plan identifies activities and uses that are allowed, managed, restricted or prohibited. Activities or uses may be allowed but subject to conditions to protect the area's values or visitor's health and wellbeing. Controls may include limiting the number of participants, duration, time of year an activity takes place, location, or any other appropriate considerations.

Allowed activities are generally informal, unstructured activities traditionally associated with the forests, such as walking. Managed activities require permits or permission. 'Restricted' activities include those that are not 'allowed', 'managed' or 'prohibited'. Prohibited activities are not considered appropriate, as they are contrary to this plan's objectives and policies. Greater Wellington reserves the right to review or restrict public access to any area for environmental reasons, public health, safety, or other management reasons consistent with that area's purpose and management. This means that an activity may be "allowed" in one area or forest but not allowed in another area or forest.

When assessing proposals to undertake activities or development, the adverse and positive effects will be considered along with this plan's objectives and policies. Greater Wellington guidelines and policies, including the *Policy on Recreation and Tourism for Concession Applications*, may also be relevant to decision-making processes.

Limited removal of natural materials may be allowed, where it is ecologically sustainable. The removal of natural materials is managed by a permit system and in accordance with relevant legislation. Hunting of introduced animals is provided for, and is managed through a separate permit system. Further detail on recreation can be found in the following section. This section does not apply to plantation forestry operations.

## Use, development and management objective

Use and development within future water collection areas is sustainable, with water quality, environmental and cultural values protected, and is consistent with management objectives including plantation forestry operations.

## Use, development and management policies

### Sustainable management

- 5.1 To provide for sustainable activities and uses that are;
- consistent with this plan's objectives and policies<sup>15</sup>; and
  - that are appropriate to the future water collection areas' remote character; and
  - meet the requirements of the Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972<sup>16</sup>.
- 5.2 To discourage or not allow activities and uses, such as mining, that:
- are inconsistent with this plan's objectives and policies, or
  - are unsustainable; or
  - detract from a sustainable region; or
  - adversely affect environmental values
- 5.3 To not allow activities that would adversely affect future water supply values
- 5.4 To demonstrate best environmental practice in/through the future water collection areas' management.

### Use, development and occupation

- 5.5 To allow the following casual/informal uses, subject to conditions and only in designated areas or tracks:
- walking;
  - tramping;
  - running;
  - camping;
  - picnics;
  - mountain biking;
  - swimming;
  - dog walking only where the dog is under control;
  - horse riding.
- 5.6 To allow hunting, subject to conditions, as a 'managed' activity.

<sup>15</sup> Policies 5.33 – 5.41 provide a process for assessing activities and uses in the forest lands.

<sup>16</sup> Refer to sections 50-58 of the Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972

- 5.7 To consider the following activities as ‘restricted’ and subject to conditions:
- removing natural materials;
  - research;
  - commercial activities, including selling food or drinks, offering transport or hire services;
  - filming, including photo shoots;
  - guided activities;
  - large recreation events, including triathlons, horse trial events, mountain biking races, orienteering;
  - large one-off activities including festivals, concerts, or large group picnics;
  - building structures;
  - exclusive occupation of an area or building;
  - motorised recreation on designated tracks in the Akatarawa Forest;
  - any activity or use not ‘allowed’, ‘managed’, or ‘prohibited’.
- 5.8 To prohibit the following activities:
- motorised recreation in the Pakuratahi Forest<sup>17</sup>,
  - lighting fires (except at designated sites),
  - erecting private dwellings<sup>18</sup>.
- 5.9 To protect the environment, users’ health, safety and wellbeing or for other management purposes, conditions on an activity or use may be imposed, including limits on:
- group size;
  - location;
  - duration;
  - time of day, season or time of year;
  - infrastructure use;
  - environmental outcomes.
- 5.10 To allow special events that are consistent with this plan’s objectives at the discretion of the Manager, Parks and Forests.
- 5.11 To grant leases and licences for areas or sites only where the use is consistent with this plan’s objectives and policies and meets the requirements of the Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972.
- 5.12 To grant exclusive use of forest resources only to the extent necessary to enable an activity that could not otherwise proceed and which, in Greater Wellington’s opinion, should be allowed in terms of this plan’s policies and objectives, and subject to any conditions imposed by Greater Wellington.
- 5.13 To require regional forest visitors<sup>19</sup> and concessionaires to remove any material or rubbish that they take into the future water collection areas.

<sup>17</sup> Excluding the Go Kart Track.

<sup>18</sup> Private dwellings include baches, holiday houses or other structures that require the long-term exclusive occupation of an area, making that area unavailable for public use.

<sup>19</sup> All people entering the forests e.g. casual visitors, contractors, concessionaires, etc.

Table 2: Regional Forests Lands: Future Water Collection Areas activities and uses

Category	Description	Akatarawa Forest	Pakuratahi Forest
Allowed	<p>These activities do not require the use of services or facilities other than those provided to all casual forest users and are not undertaken for financial gain. Subject to temporary or localised restrictions where plantation forestry operations are taking place or for other management purposes (Policies 5.1-5.4, 5.5, 6.1, 6.2, 6.9, 6.10, )</p> <p>Designated areas/tracks only</p>	Fishing, walking, tramping, picnics, camping, horse riding, swimming, mountain-biking.	Fishing, walking, tramping, picnics, camping, swimming, mountain-biking, horse riding, west of Tunnel Gully only.
Managed	<p>These activities generally require a specific location, which may involve the exclusive use or occupation of an area or resource, and/or could adversely affect natural and cultural values or safety. Permits are required, please refer to the Ranger. Subject to temporary or localised restrictions where plantation forestry operations are taking place or for other management purposes (Policies 5.1-5.4, 5.6, 6.6-6.8, 6.11- 6.15)</p> <p>Designated areas/tracks only</p>	Hunting (Map 8), motorised recreation on tracks designated on Map 5 and Table 4 only.	Hunting (Map 9) in the upper catchment area only
Restricted	<p>Applications need to be made to Greater Wellington, and will be considered on a case by case basis in accordance with this plan’s policies and objectives for assessing activities and uses. Subject to temporary or localised restrictions where plantation forestry operations are taking place or for other management purposes (Policies 5.1-5.4, 5.7, 5.18 – 5.25, 5.32- 5.40, 5-45-5.51)</p>	<p>Any activity that is not ‘allowed’, ‘managed’ or ‘prohibited’, including commercial and non commercial activities such as events, filming, tourism, guiding and selling food or drinks. Large one-off events, such as festivals, concerts or large group picnics.</p> <p>Collecting natural materials, research, building structures, exclusive occupation</p> <p>New network utilities, including renewable energy developments</p>	
Prohibited	<p>Activities that have long-term adverse effects on the environment, or would detract from the enjoyment of other forest users. (5.3, 5.8)</p>	Erecting private dwellings, lighting fires (except at designated sites for cooking), activities adversely affecting water supply values	Motorised recreation, Erecting private dwellings, lighting fires (except at designated sites for cooking), activities adversely affecting water supply values

## Natural Hazards

- 5.14 To manage the risk from natural hazards to people, assets and the environment by:
- not siting facilities or structures in hazard zones, such as floodplains, on erosion prone or unstable land,
  - closing tracks or areas, either temporarily or permanently, that pose a risk to health and safety,
  - suitably identifying and sign posting roads and trails,
  - adopting management practices that minimise erosion and sediment entering water bodies.
- 5.15 To take environmental values into account when mitigating hazard risks.
- 5.16 To allow fires for cooking in designated sites only.
- 5.17 To allow the use of portable gas barbecues or camping stoves for cooking.

## Removal of Natural Materials<sup>20</sup>

- 5.18 To provide for the use and removal of natural materials for management purposes, subject to the policies below and the 'assessment of activities and uses' policies.
- 5.19 To provide for the removal or trimming of vegetation by network utility operators for the safe operation of network utilities, in consultation with Greater Wellington<sup>21</sup>.
- 5.20 To leave fallen indigenous trees in situ for ecological purposes, unless removal is required for management purposes.
- 5.21 To manage the use and removal of natural materials by the public (including plants, animals, soil, and rocks) from the future water collection areas by a permit system.
- 5.22 To allow the removal of natural materials under the following circumstances, subject to any conditions;
- by Tangata Whenua for customary purposes; and
  - by the Community:
    - for scientific or research purposes;
    - for cultural or social purposes;
    - for conservation and ecological restoration projects.;
    - to hunt introduced animals.
- 5.23 Permits may be approved in full, with conditions, or declined based on an assessment of effects<sup>22</sup> and policies within this section.
- 5.24 To consider applications for the commercial use or removal of natural materials where a public good can be demonstrated, the activity is consistent with this plan's policies, and subject to any conditions imposed.

<sup>20</sup> This section does not regulate fishing. Fishing is regulated variously by DoC, the Ministry of Fisheries and/or the NZ Fish and Game Council.

<sup>21</sup> refer to policies 5.41 -5.44

<sup>22</sup> refer to policies 5.32-5.40

- 5.25 To consider when assessing applications to remove materials the following;
- the legal status of the land and species;
  - the ecological effects including population dynamics, habitat and ecosystem functioning over time;
  - alternative opportunities in other locations;
  - potential and actual effects of undertaking the activity on the values and factors outlined in Table 3

### **Akatarawa forest land management**

- 5.26 To investigate and develop potential linkages with regional parks and forests, including walking and horse routes between Queen Elizabeth Park, Battle Hill Farm Forest Park and the Akatarawa Forest.
- 5.27 To manage the following areas as the main public entrances:
- Moonshine Recreation Area.
  - Maungakotukutuku Valley Recreation Area, in co-operation and consultation with Kapiti Coast District Council and the Department of Conservation.
  - Cannon Point Walkway, in co-operation and consultation with Upper Hutt City Council and other landowners.
  - Karapoti Road and associated recreation developments, in co-operation and consultation with Upper Hutt City Council.
- 5.28 To require applicants to give three months notice and publicly notify any closure of the Akatarawa Forest.

### **Pakuratahi Forest Land Management**

- 5.29 To manage the following areas as the main public entrances
- Plateau Road, Te Marua
  - Maymorn
  - Kaitoke Hill
  - Kaitoke SH2 (Rail Trail Main Entry point)
- 5.30 To manage the following areas as recreation areas, primarily for cultural heritage and recreation values
- Rimutaka Trig Track
  - Rimutaka Rail Trail
  - Summit Rail Yards
  - Tunnel Gully Recreation Area.
- 5.31 To manage land gifted by the Forest and Bird Society in a manner consistent with this plan and the Reserves Act 1977. A plan will be prepared in accordance with the Reserves Act 1977, no longer than five years after these lands are gazetted<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Please refer to the 'communities' section for more information about these lands

## Assessing activities and uses

- 5.32 To consider applications for new activities and uses on a case by case basis and process those applications in an efficient, consistent and transparent manner.
- 5.33 Applications may be approved in full or part, with conditions, or declined based on an assessment of effects, and any consultation undertaken by the applicant or Greater Wellington.
- 5.34 To require applicants to provide the following information commensurate with the proposed activity and its effects;
- a description of the proposed activity including the preferred location, number of people and duration/frequency of the activity;
  - an assessment of the activity's effects on the values and the factors outlined in Table 3<sup>24</sup>;
  - a description of any measures proposed for avoiding, remedying or mitigating potential adverse effects;
  - an assessment of alternative locations, the reasons for the preferred site and why there is no other suitable location;
  - a statement of any approvals required from other agencies;
  - an identification of any persons affected, consultation undertaken, and the responses of those consulted; and
  - an assessment that demonstrates the proposed activity is consistent with this management plan and relevant legislation;
- 5.35 To undertake appropriate consultation with Tangata Whenua, the community and affected parties when assessing proposed activities and uses in a way that is commensurate with the potential activity or use's effects. Where appropriate, assessment will include consultation with public health authorities.
- 5.36 To publicly notify applications where the:
- application is for a major concession that has not been contemplated in this plan or
  - Council determines that it is in the public interest.
- 5.37 To assess the positive and negative effects of proposed activities and uses on the factors outlined in Table 3, including cumulative effects and effects over time.
- 5.38 Decisions on activities or uses will be made at the appropriate level of Council taking into account the nature and scale of the proposed activity, its potential effects and this plan's management objectives.
- 5.39 To manage the effects of activities or uses by imposing conditions, where appropriate, to avoid, remedy or mitigate effects.
- 5.40 When approving activities, Greater Wellington may charge a fee, require a bond to be posted and require mitigation or compensation.

<sup>24</sup> For the avoidance of doubt the meaning of 'effect' is the same as section 3, Resource Management Act 1991: and includes -

- a. Any positive or adverse effect; and
- b. Any temporary or permanent effect; and
- c. Any past, present, or future effect; and
- d. Any cumulative effect which arises over time or in combination with other effects - regardless of the scale, intensity, duration, or frequency of the effect, and also includes -
- e. Any potential effect of high probability; and
- f. Any potential effect of low probability which has a high potential impact.



Table 3: Assessment factors

Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity (terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems)</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Air</li> <li>• Energy [use]</li> <li>• Land</li> <li>• Waste management</li> </ul>
Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangata Whenua</li> <li>• Landscape</li> <li>• Cultural heritage</li> <li>• Recreational opportunities</li> <li>• Other users</li> <li>• Community</li> <li>• Park neighbours</li> <li>• Access/Transport</li> <li>• Safety/hazards (including to other users)</li> </ul>
Forest Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency with legislation</li> <li>• Consistency with this plan (including the water supply and environmental values)</li> <li>• Consistency with relevant Council policies</li> <li>• Exclusivity of use</li> <li>• Amount of land required/Duration of activity/Frequency of activity/Number of people involved</li> <li>• Other consent/approval required</li> <li>• Experience/capability of applicant</li> <li>• Compliance with bylaws</li> </ul>
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost to Greater Wellington</li> <li>• Return to Greater Wellington</li> <li>• Contribution to the regional economy</li> </ul>

## Network Utilities

Network utilities and public works such as water, roads, gas, electricity supply, and telecommunications have an important role in contributing to the health, safety and wellbeing of the region. This role is recognised through various laws establishing the utility operators' rights and responsibilities. For health and safety reasons, there are also national standards regulating safe distances from network utilities for activities and developments.

While some utilities, such as those located underground may have little long-term environmental impact, some utilities structures may have significant effects. Policies within this plan aim to maintain the forest's essential values, while avoiding, remedying and mitigating any adverse effects from this type of development.

The operation and maintenance of existing network utilities<sup>25</sup> are 'allowed'. As the parks are places of public recreation, it is important that Greater Wellington is informed about planned works so that public health and safety issues can be managed. The safe operation of network utilities may also require the trimming or removal of vegetation in some circumstances. Operators may trim or remove vegetation to allow for safe operation of utilities, but must inform and consult with Greater Wellington to ensure effects are minimised, except in emergencies.

New network utilities structures will be considered as "restricted" activities. As the forests are primarily held for water supply purposes, with high natural and cultural values, our preference is that structures are located outside the regional forests, where possible. If it is necessary to locate network utilities within the forest, then an assessment of effects will be required as well as measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects. Although this plan provides for public works and network utilities, other legislative frameworks must also be satisfied, prior to construction.

The Resource Management Act 1991 and the Reserves Act 1977 also govern the siting and construction of network utilities. A requiring authority may use a 'designation' to enable network utilities to be constructed. The designation will then form part of the district plan. Sections 166-186 of the RMA control the designation process, including public notification, consideration of alternative sites, assessment of effects and measures to mitigate adverse impacts. Network utilities include:

- Pipelines for gas, oil or geothermal energy.
- Telecommunications or radio communications facilities
- Electricity transmission lines or associated electricity generation facilities
- Water distribution systems for water supply or irrigation
- Drainage or sewerage infrastructure
- Roads or railways
- Airports or airport approach control facilities

### Network Utilities – existing

- 5.41 To comply with relevant legislation relating to the operation and maintenance of network utilities.
- 5.42 To recognise and provide for the operation, maintenance and minor upgrading<sup>26</sup> of existing network utilities within the forests, subject to consultation with Greater Wellington (except in cases of emergency).

- 5.43 To provide for network utility operators to remove or trim vegetation, subject to consultation with Greater Wellington (except in cases of emergency) .
- 5.44 To ensure that national standards, regulating safe distances from network utilities for activities and developments, are complied with.

### Network Utilities – new developments

- 5.45 To comply with relevant legislation governing the siting of network utilities.
- 5.46 To consider new network utilities as restricted activities and according to the policies below.
- 5.47 To require network utilities and associated cables etc, to be sited underground, unless that is inappropriate.
- 5.48 Easement options, or access arrangements, for network utilities will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.
- 5.49 Applications for the construction of public works and utilities within the forests may be approved provided that:
  - the proposed development offers benefits to the region that outweigh any possible adverse effects on the forest or that there is no reasonable alternative site, route or method, and
  - the application is consistent with this plan’s objectives and policies, including assessing ‘activities and uses’, and
  - Greater Wellington staff are empowered to: enter; inspect; require maintenance or upgrading; approve design and colour scheme of all structures; require the restoration and maintenance of sites after the completion of any works; and any other reasonable conditions.
- 5.50 A fee may be charged or a bond may be required for the construction of utility works. Mitigation or compensation may also be required for public network utilities within, occupying, or crossing the forests.
- 5.51 Renewable energy generation, e.g. windfarms, is a restricted activity and will be considered according to this plan’s objectives and policies.

**This section has set out the guiding principles for sustainable use, development and land management within the forests. This recognises that there is a range of uses that are appropriate and do not conflict with the primary purpose of holding the forest lands for future water collection areas. The key expected result is that the forest lands are managed as an example of sustainable management within the region. Greater Wellington also has environmental management systems guiding its operations. This section relies on being read in conjunction with all other areas of the plan, particularly the water supply and environmental value sections. Recreation is discussed in the following section.**

<sup>25</sup>The meaning of “Network Utility Operator” in this plan is the same as that defined in the Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region (1995), Wellington Regional Council.

<sup>26</sup>Minor upgrading means:

An increase in the carrying capacity, efficiency or security of electricity and associated telecommunications lines, utilising existing support structures or structures of similar scale or character and includes:

1. the addition of circuits and/or conductors
2. re-conductoring with higher capacity conductors
3. the resagging of conductors
4. the addition or replacement of longer more efficient insulators
5. the addition of earthwires (which may contain a telecommunications line eg fibre optic) earthpeaks and lightning rods.

Minor upgrading shall not include an increase in the voltage of the line

## Brown Trout

Brown trout are found all over New Zealand and are a popular catch for many recreational fishers. Trout are from the salmonidae family of fish but no species from this family occur naturally in New Zealand. Brown trout are native to Europe and the first introduction was in the late 1860s from Tasmanian fish stock.

In the late nineteenth century acclimatisation societies around the country supported hatcheries to release fish stock into rivers, primarily for sport fishing. Brown trout were the first introduction of the salmonidae family into New Zealand. Quinnat salmon and rainbow trout were also introduced for people to enjoy fishing. Populations within New Zealand are now largely self sustaining and introductions are no longer common. However, particular regard must be given to the protection of trout habitat per section 7 of the Resource Management Act 1991, when exercising powers or functions under that Act.

The Hutt River fishery is one of the best in the region, and the Whakatikei and Pakuratahi Rivers are also important fisheries. Brown trout like the clear waters of these rivers and native forests provide excellent habitat and water quality for the fish to live in. The diet of brown trout include insects such as caddisflies and midges, while larger fish also eat other fish, including whitebait and smelt, and even frogs. Clean gravel river beds with fine shingle are important for trout to spawn in. Female fish bury the fertilised eggs in these fine gravels in a nest site called a "redd". Adult fish prefer deeper pools in rivers and streams where they can hide under the cover of overhanging banks or vegetation. Adult trout may also travel to the sea during the autumn and winter months.

Today, trout fisheries are managed by Fish and Game New Zealand, successor of the acclimatisation societies. There are rules governing the size and number of fish you can catch and a licence fee is payable to fish for trout.

Like to know more?

Contact your local Fish and Game Office

Or check out

[www.fishandgame.org.nz](http://www.fishandgame.org.nz) or

[www.niwa.cri.nz](http://www.niwa.cri.nz)





## 6. Recreation

Changing work patterns mean that greater use of the future water collection areas may be expected mid-week and in traditionally non-peak times. Increasingly busy lives and a multitude of potential activities may lead to an increased demand for shorter walks. An ageing population is likely to reinforce these trends and walking group numbers may increase the pressure on accessible areas.

Recent years have seen a decrease in organised sport, and a corresponding increase in individual, less formal sports such as walking, running, and biking. The 'leisure industry', including tourism, is now a major part of the economy and likely to continue growing. This may lead to more applications for concessions to carry out commercial recreation and tourism in the future water collection areas.

Throughout the community there is an increasing awareness of the environment and concern for environmental quality. Use of accessible recreation areas in the forests for environmental education of the community has increased over recent years, and may continue to do so. Trends in both regional parks and forests include increasing demands for guided walks and interpretation, motorised recreation, and the use of the recreation areas for large events and festivals, for instance, the Tunnel Gully Recreation Area.

In providing for recreation, future water collection areas will continue to be managed as remote areas primarily for tramping/walking, mountain biking, hunting, nature appreciation and related activities, along with approved motorised activities in the Akatarawa Forest (subject to specific area and permit policies). Maps are provided detailing tracks that are available through both forests as well as areas where hunting, with a permit, may occur.

This section must be read in conjunction with all other parts of the plan. Recreation within the regional forest lands is subject to Greater Wellington fulfilling its management role of holding the lands for the primary purposes of future water collection and plantation forestry. In addition, environmental and cultural heritage values must be protected in any use, development or management of the lands.

### Recreation Objective

Recreation within future water collection areas is sustainable, with water quality, environmental and cultural values protected, and is consistent with management objectives including plantation forestry operations.

### General recreation policies

- 6.1 To allow public access on foot to all parts of the forests, subject to temporary or localised restrictions where plantation forestry operations are taking place or for other management purposes.
- 6.2 To allow camping and overnight stays at designated sites only. These sites will be indicated at entrance areas and in forest brochures.
- 6.3 To offer varied opportunities for regional forest users by providing multiple use tracks and facilities where possible, appropriate and compatible with the primary management objective of future water supply.

- 6.4 To make linkages and connections with other open space recreational opportunities, such as walkways managed by territorial authorities, the Department of Conservation or initiatives such as Te Araroa.
- 6.5 To maintain recreational structures, facilities and tracks to standards specified in the asset management plan.

### **Recreational Hunting**

- 6.6 To provide for recreational hunting, subject to the management of ecological values and provided it does not take priority over other pest animal management techniques.
- 6.7 To control recreational hunting through a permit system and subject to conditions to ensure the safety of hunters and members of the public. Conditions for hunting are included on the permit and shall be followed at all times. The New Zealand Arms Code should be followed at all times.
- 6.8 To ensure the safety of all forest users by only allowing recreational hunting in designated areas.

### **Akatarawa Forest Recreation**

The Akatarawa Forest provides a remote experience in contrast to the regional parks, which are generally located in semi-rural areas. The network of roads and tracks within the Akatarawa Forest provides a regionally significant resource for off-road vehicle and mountain-biking activities and is the site of the Southern Hemisphere's largest mountain biking event, the Karapoti Classic.

Trampers and hunters also use the track network. The number of visitors is estimated to be over 60,000 per year. At the Akatarawa Forest fringes there are three recreation areas that provide access to the forest interior and space for backcountry oriented recreation. These are the Cannon Point Walkway, Maungakotukutuku Valley and Moonshine Recreation Areas.

### **Akatarawa Recreation and Activities Policies**

- 6.9 To allow cycle access to all vehicle trails, and any other designated bike trails, subject to periodic or localised restrictions for management purposes.
- 6.10 To allow horse access in designated areas, subject to periodic or localised restrictions for management purposes.

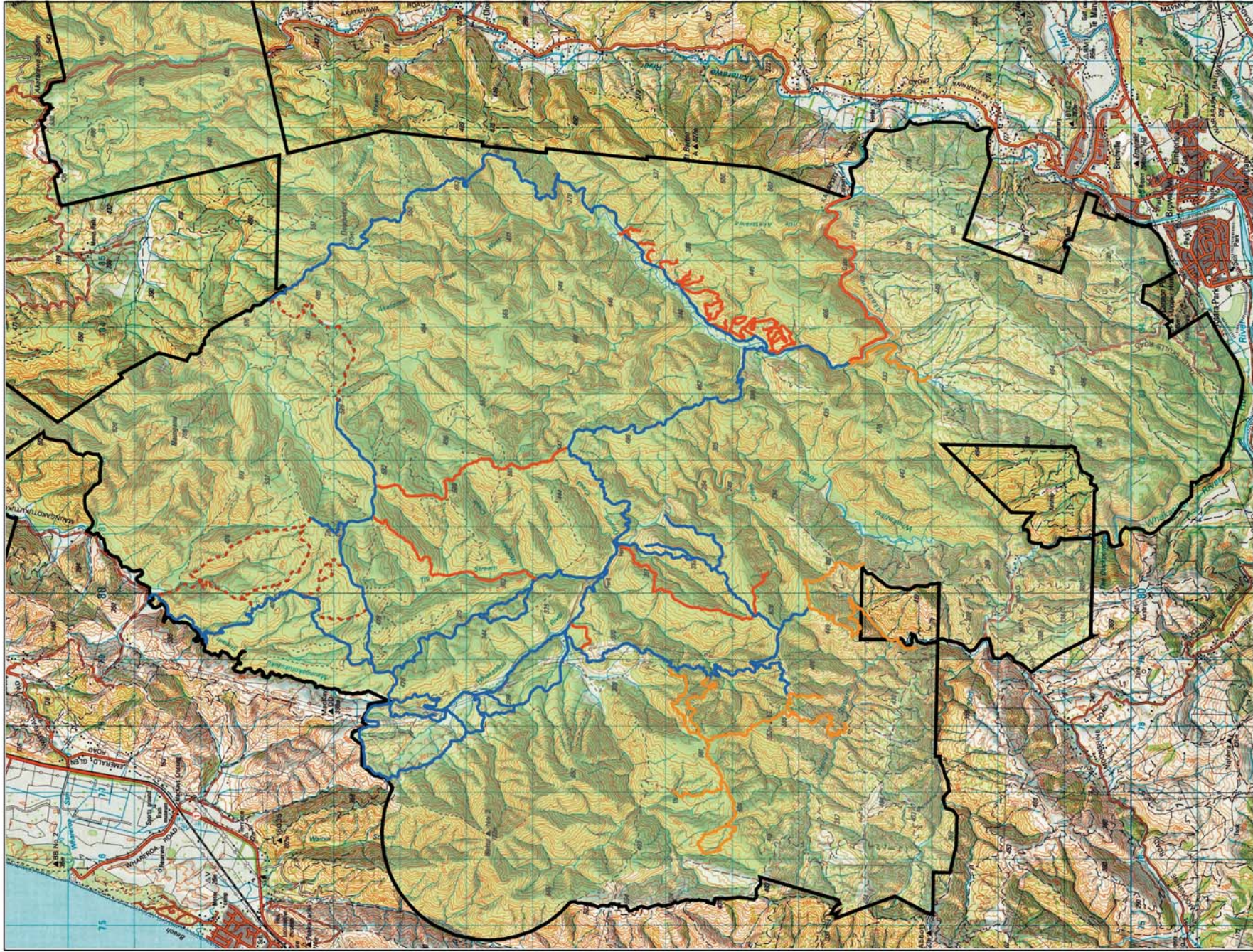
### **Motorised Recreation and the Akatarawa Forest Tracks Review**

The Akatarawa Forest is an important regional resource for motorised recreation. Greater Wellington runs a permit system for casual trail bikers and 4WD clubs on designated tracks. All motorised recreational users are required to comply with the Motorised Recreational User Code and Management Guidelines. The Akatarawa Recreation Action Committee (ARAC) and Greater Wellington jointly developed this code in 1997. The code explains the restrictions and behaviour standards necessary to meet statutory obligations protecting the environment, other recreational users and adjoining landowners. Zones were identified within the forest where motorised recreation could occur and specific events could be undertaken with permits. Motorised recreation was not allowed outside those designated zones.

Table 4: Motorised Recreation Tracks

Name of Track	Policy
<b>Available</b>	
Shodders / Roy Days Road / Siberia	Main bulldozed track is available for motorcycle and quad use only. Side trams and tracks not available for use, if evidence found of use off the main track then the main track will be closed.
Rimu Road Side Tracks (three on eastern side)	These three tracks are available for all motorised recreational use, subject to Greater Wellington satisfaction that sediment is being adequately addressed.
Neil's Track	Neil's track is available for motorcycle and quad use, subject to Greater Wellington satisfaction that sediment is being adequately addressed.
Orange Hut to Whakatikei Forest Back Track (Ruts)	Available for motorised recreational use. Access through the Whakatikei wetland is closed and not available.
Firewood Loop - Main Loop Track	Available for motorised recreational use.
<b>Norms Loop</b>	<b>Available for motorcycle and quad use.</b>
Link Track	Available to motorcycles and quads only, subject to the conditions that: only the main Link Track formation is used (no diversions will be allowed more than two metres from the centre-line of the tram); -no access is allowed to occur down the side tracks and trams; -appropriate maintenance can be achieved within existing resources; and -Greater Wellington satisfaction that sediment is being adequately addressed.
Wayne's Track	Available to motorcycles and quad use only, subject to the conditions that: -only the main Wayne's Track formation is used (no diversions will be allowed more than two metres from the centre-line of the tram) – not to be widened for quads; -no access is allowed to occur down the side tracks and trams; -Greater Wellington satisfaction that sediment is being adequately addressed.
24 Hour Track	Available for motorised recreational use, subject to meeting OSH standards and a safety plan prepared by ARAC that is acceptable to GW.
Roller Coaster	Available for motorised recreational use.
Fred's Track	Available for motorcycle and quad recreational use.
Linking Track Between 24 Hour Track and Perham's Road	Available for motorised recreational use.
<b>Consented use only</b>	
Cooks B Block	These areas are generally closed and not available for casual motorised recreation, but are available for consented club events (subject to plantation forestry requirements). Area is popular for horse riding and is used regularly for these activities.
257, Top Bogs and Associated Western Tracks	These tracks are not available for casual use, but are available for consented club events.
<b>Closed tracks and areas not available for motorised recreation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drapers Flat and Tassie's Saddle</li> <li>• Cooks A Block</li> <li>• Hydro Stream Track</li> <li>• Deadwood Side Track (south-western side)</li> <li>• Martin's Creek / Promenade</li> <li>• Maunganui Track</li> <li>• Small Side Track off Rollercoaster (eastern side)</li> <li>• Firewood Loop - Western Side Tracks (shown in blue on map)</li> <li>• Karapoti Road to Lindsay Block and Beech Spur</li> <li>• Any tracks not identified on Map 5</li> <li>• Any forestry roads, tram tracks or other routes, whether marked or unmarked on any maps, including 260 series topographical maps</li> </ul>	





**Legend**

- Akatarawa Forest Boundary
- Recreation motor vehicle events
- Recreation motor vehicle roads
- Trail bikes and quads
- Hazardous Route

1:50,000

**AKATARAWA FOREST**  
**Draft Motorised Recreation Access Tracks**  
 Copyright: Wellington Regional Council  
 Topographic and Cadastral Information is copyright LINZ

The zone map managing motorised access was reviewed as part of preparing this plan. To ensure clarity for forest users and Greater Wellington staff, 4WD access maps have moved from using zones to identifying specific tracks that are available for motorised recreation.

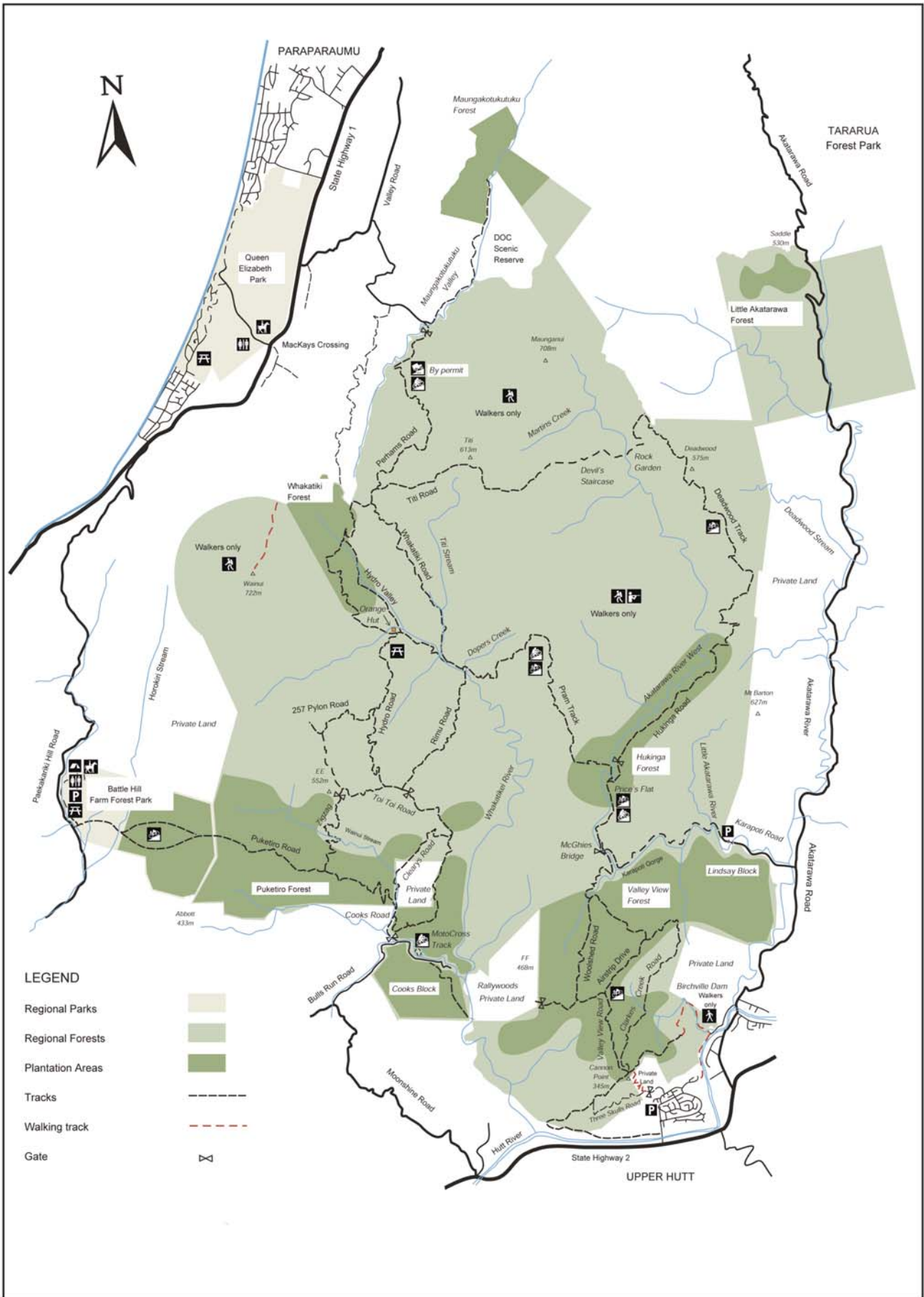
Late in 2001, Greater Wellington began working with ARAC to identify and assess tracks available for motorised recreation. The recreational, environmental and heritage values of the tracks were assessed, along with potential management implications, including impacts on other recreational opportunities and uses, cultural heritage values, environmental values, water supply considerations and adjacent landowners.

Through this process, additional tracks (not previously shown on the zoning map) were identified. Other tracks were closed, as continued use was adversely affecting the area’s heritage and environmental values, in particular the tramways and indigenous vegetation. Conditions apply to some tracks to minimise impacts and motorised use will no longer be allowed if the conditions are not met. Greater Wellington has agreed that the tracks identified on Map 5 and Table 4 are available subject to meeting the conditions of use in Table 4 and this plan’s policies.

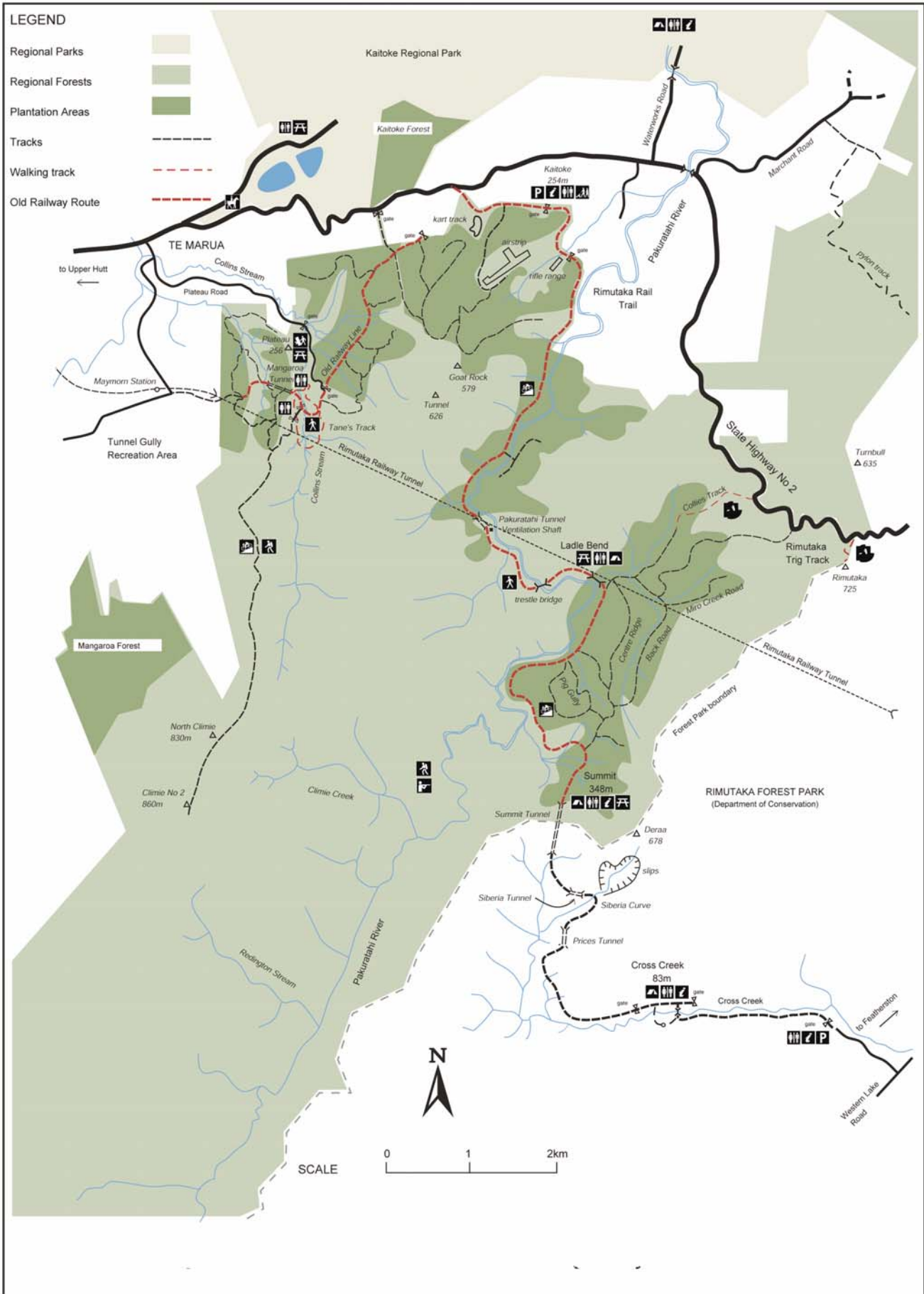
**Akatarawa Forest Motorised Recreation Tracks Review: Proposed Policies**

- 6.11 To allow public access by motorised vehicle activities defined in Table 4 to designated tracks identified in Map 5, subject to periodic or localised restrictions where plantation forestry operations are taking place and for other management purposes as a ‘managed’ activity.
- 6.12 To use a permit system to control and monitor the use of motorised vehicles by the public in the Akatarawa Forest and when crossing adjacent Council land.
- 6.13 To require all clubs and individuals using motorised vehicles in the Akatarawa Forest to adhere to the principles of Tread Lightly, the Motorised Recreational User Code and Management Guidelines 1997 and Map 5.

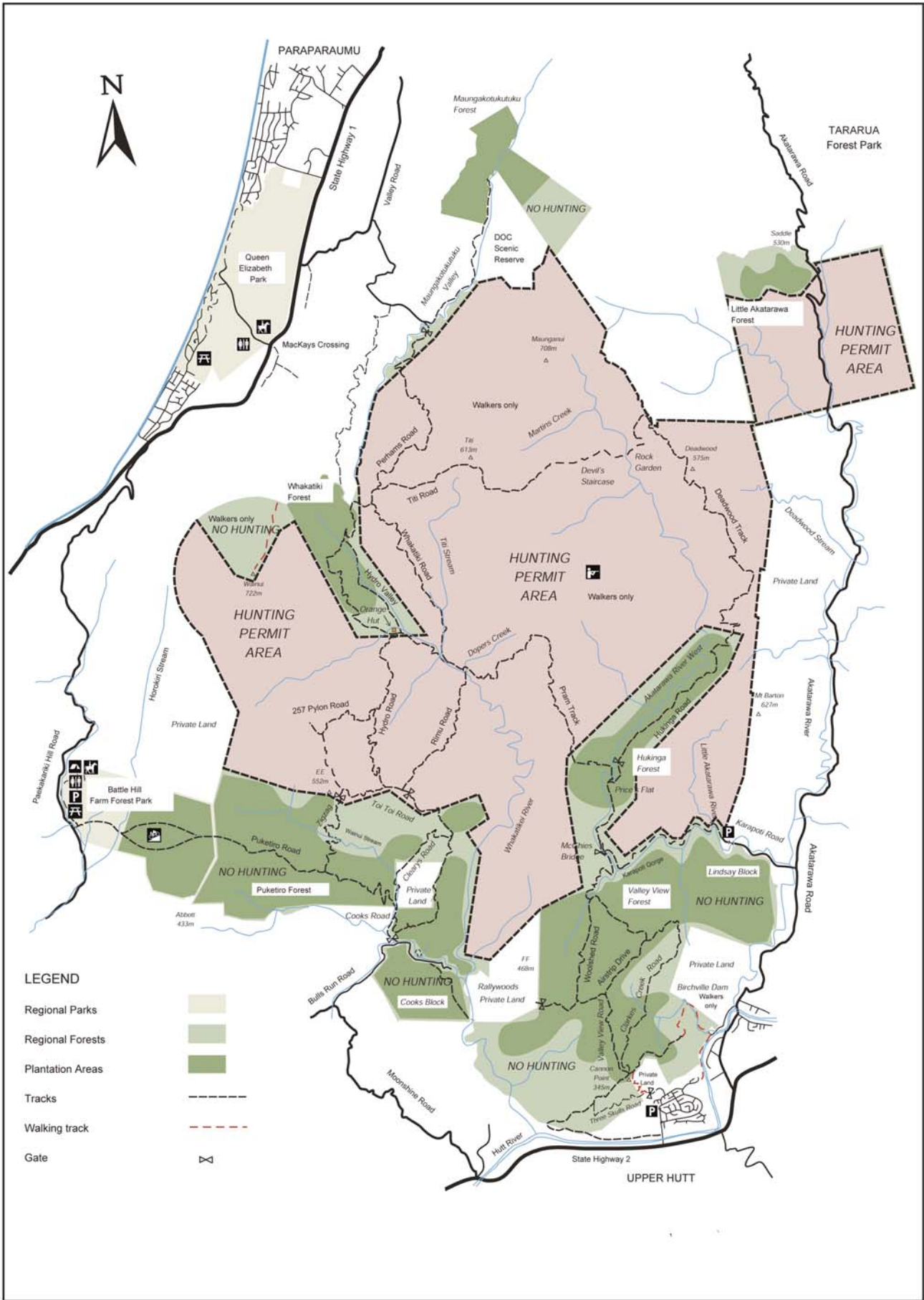
<p>T Travel and recreate with minimum impact</p> <p>R Respect the environment</p> <p>E Educate yourself, plan and prepare before you go</p> <p>A Allow for future use of the outdoors, leave it better than you found it</p> <p>D Discover the rewards of responsible recreation</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>LIGHTLY</b></p>
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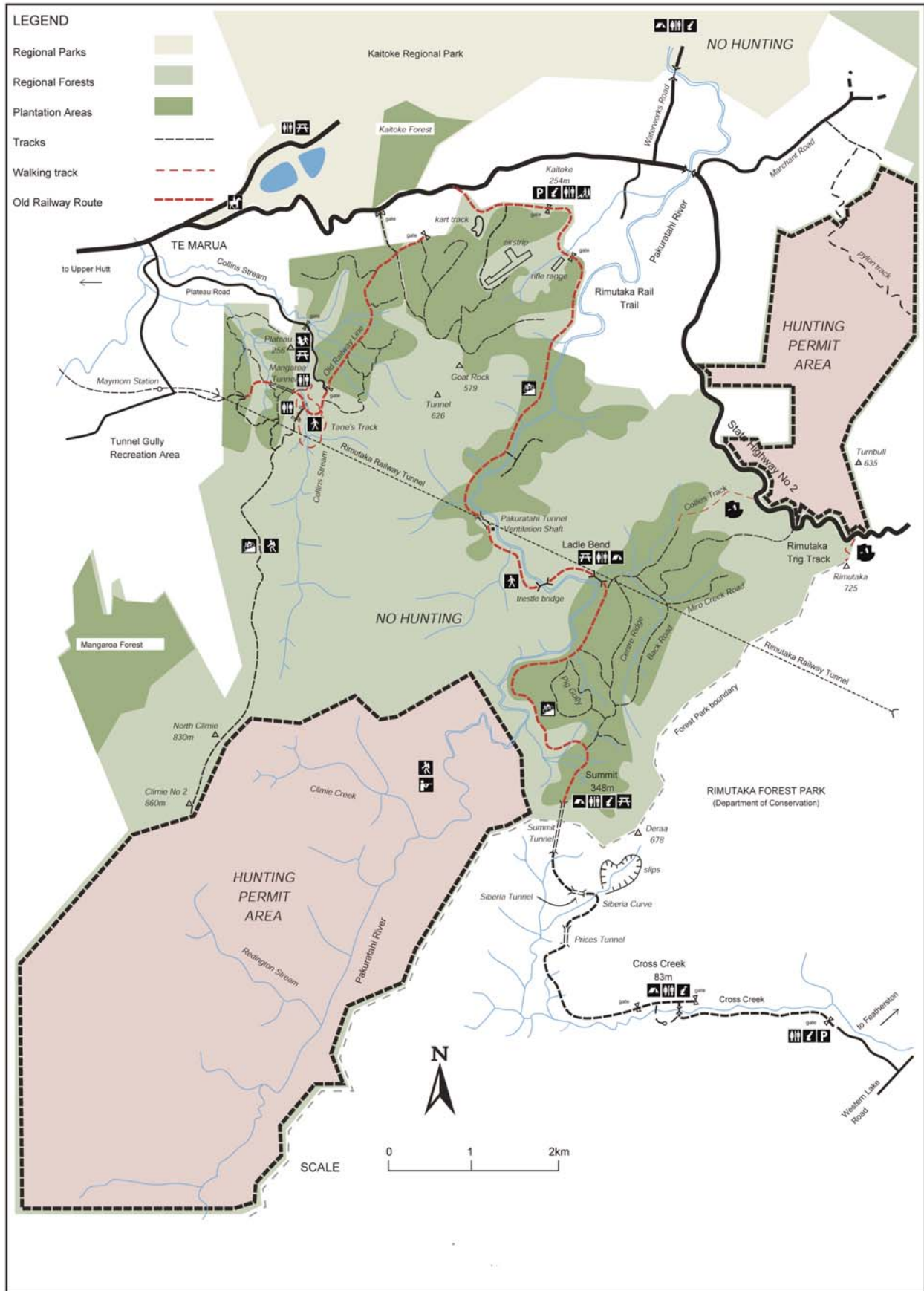
Map 6: Akatarawa Forest Recreation



Map 7: Pakuratahi Forest Recreation



Map 8: Akatarawa Forest Hunting



Map 9: Pakuratahi Forest Hunting

## Pakuratahi forest recreational access and activities

The Pakuratahi Forest is easily accessible from State Highway 2 and lies between the Kaitoke Regional Park and the Wainuiomata Water Collection Area. The most popular recreation area is at Tunnel Gully, which is named for its link with the Rimutaka Railway and has an estimated 45,000 visits each year. The 221m long Mangaroa Tunnel was built between 1875 and 1877 and its working life ended in November 1955 when the new Rimutaka Tunnel was opened. The area is popular for picnics, mountain biking and walking through the remnant native bush. Toilets and parking are provided.

The Rimutaka Trig Track is a 45 minute return walk. The track begins close to the Rimutaka Hill Road summit and climbs nearly 200 metres to the Rimutaka Trig, at 725 metres above sea level. On a clear day there are superb views of southern Wairarapa, including Lake Wairarapa and the Aorangi Mountains extending south-east to Cape Palliser. The original forests near the summit were burned off more than 130 years ago when the road was built. The track zigzags its way up an exposed slope, where indigenous trees and shrubs have slowly re-established themselves. Some plants have become stunted due to the harsh conditions in which they live and there is a variety of native sub-alpine plants. The area is windswept by northwesterers and regularly covered in mist, while in the winter the area can experience snow.



Other recreation opportunities include the Rimutaka Rail Trail, which is a well-known heritage feature. The Trail is a popular recreation route used by more than 30,000 walkers, runners and cyclists each year. Other popular recreational activities in the Forest include hunting, tramping, and swimming. Also within the northern area are a go-kart track, rifle range and an airstrip (subject to licence agreements). Motorised recreation is prohibited in the Pakuratahi Forest (refer policy 5.9)

### **Pakuratahi Forest Recreation and Activities**

- 6.14 To allow cycle access to all vehicle trails and any other designated cycle trails, subject to periodic or localised restrictions for management purposes. Tracks adjacent to the Rimutaka Rail Trail must be accessed from the Rail Trail entrance at Kaitoke or from the Wairarapa. No entry is allowed from SH2 (Rimutaka Hill Road) to tracks in the Pakuratahi Block.
- 6.15 To allow horse access in designated areas, west of the Tunnel Gully Recreation Area, and subject to periodic or localised restrictions for management purposes. Horses are not allowed through tunnels or other parts of the Pakuratahi Forest.

**Many people enjoy recreation in the Akatarawa and Pakuratahi forests, including walking, mountain biking, hunting (by permit only) and 4WD tracks (in the Akatarawa Forest and by permit only). This plan seeks to manage these activities in a sustainable way that recognises the primacy of water collection and environmental values in the forests' management. Some restrictions are also necessary for health and safety during plantation forestry operations. Recreation, in the main, is managed by designating track use to reflect the range of uses and experiences people require. This is supported by brochures, a 4WD code of practice, and signage. Infrastructure and maintenance service levels are set by a comprehensive asset management system. The recreation objective and policies contribute to the following quality of life outcomes; culture, meeting needs locally, leisure, safety, distinctive sense of place, and health.**



## 7. Plantation forestry

The future water collection areas total 23,500 hectares, of which approximately 3,900 hectares are managed as exotic plantation forests. These forests are generally located within larger areas of indigenous forest and border semi rural areas. Plantation forests form a band through the south of the Akatarawa Forest and through the northern parts of the Pakuratahi Forest (refer Maps 2 and 3). The blocks are distinguished by location but also differ in size, age, altitude, accessibility, exposure, soil type and susceptibility to pests.

Greater Wellington's plantation forests were originally planted to provide regional employment opportunities, to suppress gorse, and for soil conservation purposes. The lands are now held primarily for economic return. A more intensive silviculture programme has been introduced and an age structure regime is used for rotations. Prior to logging, an assessment is carried out to assess whether the area will be replanted.

This management plan does not control plantation forestry activities or operations. Greater Wellington's plantation forests are managed in accordance with the Greater Wellington Plantation Forest Working Plan 2000-2010 and industry best practice. The Working Plan states Greater Wellington's operational forestry intentions, particularly those relating to planting, tending and harvesting regimes and marketing strategies. The current plan is effective until 30 June 2010 and has been approved by the Minister of Forestry. The plan is reported to Council annually and needs to be formally reviewed after five years from the date of the Minister's original approval (in 2005).

Generally, within forestry plantation areas, Greater Wellington seeks to use the most suitable lands for forestry, retiring unsuitable or uneconomic lands. If the production forestry crop is unsatisfactory, the land will not be replanted for production forestry. The land will be either be replanted with indigenous species or allowed to regenerate naturally. Areas no longer appropriate for plantation forestry will be managed as part of the indigenous forest and governed by this plan.

Significant new plantings in areas not previously used for plantation forestry are subject to specific Greater Wellington approval. A full assessment of future water supply, environmental, cultural heritage and landscape values, as well as, economic and forest management issues will be undertaken before Council makes a decision.

As the existing plantation forests mature, their value to Greater Wellington will increase and provide an ongoing source of revenue. Harvesting began in 1994 and is expected to continue on a sustainable basis. For health and safety reasons, recreation may be curtailed when harvesting is occurring.

As with this management plan, the plantation working plan should be read in the context of other Greater Wellington policy and planning documents. District and regional council plans' control plantation forestry and the effects of logging, and activities are authorised by resource consents, as required. The Regional Policy Statement, the Regional Freshwater and Soil Plans specify a range of requirements relating to vegetation cover on erosion prone land, soil disturbance, protecting natural values, amenity values and public access. The Upper Hutt District Plan includes buffer zone provisions for water bodies, as well compliance and notification requirements, and earthworks restrictions.

The New Zealand Forestry Accord 1991 is an agreement between forest industry and conservation groups, governing the logging of existing indigenous forests. The Accord states that the following defined areas will not be cleared for plantation forestry:

- Contiguous natural forest between one and five hectares in area with an average canopy tree height of at least six metres, which is practical to protect;
- Contiguous natural forest greater than five hectares in area with an actual or emerging predominance of naturally occurring indigenous trees of any height;
- Any native vegetation recommended for protection through the Protected Natural Areas (PNA) or classified as a Site of Special Wildlife Interest (SSWI) or Recommended Area for Protection (RAP).

Greater Wellington's policy is to comply with the Accord's provisions.

### **Plantation Forestry Objective**

The exotic forestry business is operated successfully by adopting best industry practice and by maximising the returns to Greater Wellington in the medium term.

### **Plantation Forestry Policies**

- 7.1 To manage and maintain exotic plantation forests primarily for commercial return for Greater Wellington.
- 7.2 To provide for the protection, management and harvesting of exotic forests through Greater Wellington's Annual Plan and Annual Report, the Greater Wellington Plantation Forest Working Plan 2000 – 2010 and best industry practice.
- 7.3 To set out the long-term strategic and financial goals of exotic forest management in the Plantation Forestry Working Plan.
- 7.4 To manage the plantation forests, having due regard to soil and water values and the desirability of allowing compatible recreation activities.
- 7.5 To ensure compliance with the Regional Policy Statement, Regional Freshwater and Soil Plans, the Upper Hutt District and Porirua City Plans in all areas of plantation forestry operations (including planting, roading and harvesting).
- 7.6 To minimise disturbance to ecosystems and to soil and water values through the application of best industry practice. Buffer zones for replanting riparian areas are:
  - To leave 20 metres unplanted on either side of rivers.
  - To leave 10 metres unplanted on either side of streams.
- 7.7 To take into account the potential effect of the proposed forestry developments and operations on the quality and quantity of water available from catchments for future water supply purposes.
- 7.8 To comply with the provisions of the New Zealand Forestry Accord 1991.
- 7.9 To assess the land's suitability for continued forestry use, including effects on future water supply, environmental protection and landscape as well as economic and forest management considerations. Where a decision is made not to replant, to manage the area as part of the indigenous areas.

- 7.10 To consider opportunities for rationalising exotic forest boundaries in accordance with the above policies relating to minimising disturbance to ecosystems, soil conservation and maintaining water values. (In general, it is anticipated that this policy may lead to small-scale adjustments to rationalise and improve the use of suitable forestry lands.)

### **Akatarawa small-scale woodlots**

- 7.11 To preserve existing small-scale exotic woodlots and stands through their natural life for amenity values and cultural associations. Upon the demise of these stands the land will be left to regenerate in indigenous forest, unless the land is located within existing plantation forest.

### **Pakuratahi Forest Plantation Forestry**

- 7.12 To set aside buffer zones of permanent vegetation on either side of the Rimutaka Rail Trail
- 7.13 When replanting exotic forests to leave 40 metres unplanted on either side of the railway formation.
- 7.14 To retain existing exotic forests which have the primary purpose of protecting unstable slopes where they are more effective than indigenous vegetation.

**This section's objective and policies outline provisions that regulate plantation forestry operations, within the exotic forest areas. The expected result is that plantation forestry activities will be sustainably managed into the future. The forestry tracks and exotic forests provide opportunities for recreation, which in turn contribute to the following quality of life outcomes; culture, meeting needs locally, leisure, safety, distinctive sense of place, and health.**

### Rimutaka Hill Road Scenic Reserve

In November 2000, the Royal Forest and Bird Society approached Greater Wellington offering to gift land on the Rimutaka Hill Road. The land covers approximately 67 hectares of regenerating bush on the western side of the Rimutaka Hill summit. It adjoins other Greater Wellington land within the northern portion of the Pakuratahi Forest.

The Forest and Bird Society purchased the land as its members believe the area has conservation values worth protecting (they have undertaken vegetation surveys in the area) and believe more land along the Rimutaka Hill Road should be protected and held in public ownership. The Society purchased the land with grants from its local branches and from the Nature Heritage Fund.

In 2001, Greater Wellington agreed to accept the gift of the land from the Forest and Bird Society. Conditions of the gifting were:

- That the land be declared a scenic reserve under the Reserves Act 1977;
- If ever the land is no longer required by Greater Wellington it is to be offered back to the Society at the same nominal consideration, (i.e., as a gift); and
- That the Society's part in the purchase be recognised in any literature produced by Greater Wellington on the reserve and that the Society, in consultation with Greater Wellington, can erect a sign or plaque recognising the gift.

Prior to passing a resolution declaring the land scenic reserve, Greater Wellington is required under Section 14 of the Reserves Act to publicly notify the proposal, calling for submissions. This was done in October 2003 and no submissions were received. The final step is to place a notice in the New Zealand Gazette. Once this has occurred the land will formally be a scenic reserve under the Reserves Act 1977.

By accepting the land, Greater Wellington has widened the wildlife corridor between the southern and northern portions of the Pakuratahi Forest and ultimately on to the Hutt Water Collection Area. This will mean that the neighbouring land will be maintained to the same pest control and forest health standards as the remainder of the Pakuratahi Forest. The Block will be managed as part of the Pakuratahi Forest, to protect the scenic and environmental values of the reserve<sup>32</sup>.



## 8. Communities, neighbours and other agencies

Involving communities and co-operating with neighbours is important to the successful management of the future water collection areas. This requires giving people opportunities to enjoy, visit, learn about, participate in and protect these areas within limits necessary for Greater Wellington to meet the forest's primary functions as future water supply and plantation forestry areas.

There is a flow of social, economic and ecological effects between the future water collection areas and the surrounding lands and communities. Agencies, such as the Department of Conservation, Porirua City Council, Upper Hutt City Council and Kapiti Coast District Council manage and control land for conservation and sustainable management purposes, while Fish and Game New Zealand advocate for recreational hunting and fishing. Healthy relationships with these agencies are key to realising this plan's aims and aspirations.

Involving the community and other agencies in the forests offers benefits as it:

- Promotes further understanding between forest managers, the community and agencies about values and needs connected with the forests.
- Establishes communication and trust.
- Increases knowledge exchange and skills.
- Increases support for the future water collection areas, their values and their protection.
- Reduces the need for enforcement and control and improves monitoring.
- Achieves outcomes that might not otherwise be achieved.

The community is active and involved in the regional forests in a number of ways, including environmental education programmes for school children and volunteering. A planting day was held in 2003 at Summit, part of the Rimutaka Rail Trail, to mark a rail heritage award. Volunteers are involved in organising events in the forests, including charity 4WD tours, running, and mountain biking events. Re-building Orange Hut in the Akatarawa Forest by the Akatarawa Recreation Advisory Committee (ARAC) was an important achievement improving facilities.

Future volunteer programmes need to consider whether the programme:

- Is effective, satisfying and has benefits for volunteers, Greater Wellington and the future water collection areas;
- Provides for different levels and types of involvement to encourage wider community involvement;
- Has a long-term focus, contributing to the long-term vision and goals for regional forest management;
- Is planned and undertaken in collaboration with the community;
- Ensures that both Greater Wellington and volunteers have the necessary resources and skills to make their contribution;
- Is in accordance with this plan's objectives and policies.

Access and volunteer's involvement needs to be balanced with management constraints and/or requirements, for instance, restricting access during exotic forest harvesting or pest management operations.

### **Communities, neighbours and agencies objective**

Future water collection areas are valued by the community and the community is actively involved and connected with them.

### **Communities, neighbours and agencies policies**

- 8.1 To be a good neighbour and work with neighbours to ensure that issues of interest and concern are addressed in forest management.
- 8.2 To co-operate with local and central government, other agencies and the community to protect the values of the future water collection areas and maximise the benefits from them.
- 8.3 To involve and consult with the community in accordance with the Local Government Act 2002.
- 8.4 To encourage and support community involvement and liaise with community groups.
- 8.5 To ensure volunteer programmes are effective in fulfilling the needs of the volunteers and forest management objectives.
- 8.6 To promote the future water collection areas and to provide accessible, relevant information to the community about forest management and values.
- 8.7 To promote the use of future water collection areas as places that encourage increased learning about the environment, cultural heritage and best practice for sustainable management of the environment.

**The policies and objectives in this section recognise the importance of maintaining good relationships in managing the forest lands. Greater Wellington will continue to liaise with local and central Government to ensure our statutory obligations are met. Without the support of the community, the aspirations of this plan will not be realised to the fullest extent possible. Greater Wellington will continue to listen, inform and consult with the community over issues affecting the forest lands.**

## 9. Tangata Whenua

Tangata Whenua have ongoing relationships with and interests in the future water collection areas, and seek to continue traditional practices for protecting natural and cultural heritage resources. Greater Wellington will work with Tangata Whenua to recognise and, where appropriate, provide for these in regional forest management.

The Charter of Understanding establishes the relationships between Tangata Whenua and Greater Wellington in the context of the Treaty of Waitangi and guides those relationships in all areas of Greater Wellington business. The Charter recognises the right of Greater Wellington to govern and carry out its statutory functions and the rangatiratanga of the Tangata Whenua. The relationship is intended to be mutually beneficial and based on good faith, co-operation and understanding.

Tangata Whenua have said they want to be involved in the future water collection areas through:

- The expression of kaitiakitanga (the traditional guardianship role of Tangata Whenua) in the future water collection areas;
- Customary care and use of natural resources such as mahinga kai (food gathering areas) or plants for weaving or medicinal purposes;
- Participation in the management of their cultural heritage and wahi tapu;
- Informing and educating the public about their history, tikanga and interests in the future water collection areas;
- Reflecting the status of Tangata Whenua throughout the future water collection areas, for instance, signage and interpretation;
- Employment opportunities for Iwi members;
- Providing opportunities and activities of interest and relevance to Maori in the future water collection areas.

Greater Wellington and Tangata Whenua need to work together to address Greater Wellington's wider public interest responsibilities alongside those of Tangata Whenua. The specific mechanisms for this will vary depending on the nature of each party's interests and the circumstances of the case. The management objectives and policies outlined below provide a starting point. Greater Wellington will work towards further developing relationships, and appropriate arrangements, with Tangata Whenua at a range of levels that work for both parties and the future water collection areas.

Tangata Whenua have also highlighted the importance of Treaty claims that have been registered with the Waitangi Tribunal covering areas across the region. Although a report has just been released on the Port Nicholson Block, many claims are potentially years away from a Tribunal hearing and resolution. When managing its lands, Greater Wellington needs to be aware of Treaty claims and settlements and ensure that the ability of the Crown and Tangata Whenua to settle grievances is not compromised. Only Crown land is available for settlement of Treaty claims<sup>28</sup>. Greater Wellington lands, including forests, is considered private land and is not available for use in Treaty settlements.

<sup>28</sup> The only exception to this are some lands formerly owned by State Owned Enterprises. In these cases, there is a memorial over the title specifying the encumbrance. Greater Wellington does not hold any lands within the Pakuratahi or Akatarawa Forests affected by this provision.

The objectives and policies that follow set out the ways in which Greater Wellington proposes to work with Tangata Whenua to provide for the range of interests that Tangata Whenua have in different aspects of regional forest management. The objectives and policies outlined in this section are relevant to, and should be read in conjunction with, the remainder of the plan.

### **Tangata Whenua Objectives**

- 9.1 Future water collection areas are managed in co-operation with Tangata Whenua.
- 9.2 The traditional guardianship role of Tangata Whenua is recognised and provided for.
- 9.3 Tangata Whenua interests in respect of their lands, forests, fisheries and other taonga are actively protected.

### **Tangata Whenua Policies**

- 9.1 Consistent with Greater Wellington's management role and reasonable public use and enjoyment, to work with Tangata Whenua to:
  - Develop and maintain relationships based on good faith, co-operation and understanding and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2002.
  - Determine opportunities for the practical expression of traditional guardianship roles of Tangata Whenua and the maintenance of mauri.
  - Recognise and provide for the customary use of natural resources by Tangata Whenua within the context of sustainable management and in accordance with relevant legislation.
  - Recognise Tangata Whenua knowledge in defining the cultural importance of areas, the information provided to the public, and the interpretation of Tangata Whenua histories.
  - Provide appropriate opportunities for Tangata Whenua participation in the management and protection of wahi tapu (sites of significance).
  - Promote awareness of, and respect for, Tangata Whenua culture, interests, heritage, language and place names within the future water collection areas.
- 9.2 To take account of relevant Treaty of Waitangi claims when developing policies and plans and making management decisions.
- 9.3 Identify and, where appropriate, make provision for the specific recreational needs of Tangata Whenua.

**Greater Wellington will honour the obligations articulated in the policies and objectives above. In this way the values and needs of Tangata Whenua will be incorporated into the area's management in a culturally appropriate manner. Working together will help ensure that taonga and wahi tapu will be actively protected for future generations.**



## 10. Research, monitoring and review

Good information is essential to understand and manage the many values that are important within the regional forests. Conducting research, monitoring and reviewing activities and actions are the key methods of gathering information about the environment. Together with the information gathered by the Department of Conservation, other researchers, Tangata Whenua and the community, Greater Wellington is able to see how the environment is changing over time. In addition, understanding the impact of management decisions on the forests allows Greater Wellington to assess its performance to see whether the desired results are achieved and whether techniques are effective and/or efficient.

Greater Wellington monitors indigenous ecosystems to assess the effects of management on overall ecosystem health. The two broad approaches are 'state of the environment' and 'outcome' (or results) monitoring. The first approach allows an assessment of the forest's health, whereas the second helps determine the success of management. Plots, surveys, and surveillance are common techniques currently used to assess ecosystem health. Threatened or pest species are monitored to assess their status and whether management techniques are successful.

To ensure that we meet the needs of the regional community, surveys are taken every two years. Feedback from visitor's comments and submissions are also important for Greater Wellington to understand the community's needs and requirements. Participation in the plan reviews allows everybody the opportunity to put their views forward and have them considered.

Greater Wellington also needs to provide good information about regional forests to allow people to learn about and increase their appreciation of them. This includes environmental and cultural heritage values, as well as the recreational opportunities available.

Results are reported through a variety of mechanisms including Greater Wellington's state of the environment report, completed every five years, annual monitoring report cards, internet and triple bottom line reporting. Asset management systems are audited and reported to council every year to ensure that environmental health and recreation infrastructure meet the agreed service standards.

Importantly, this plan is reviewed every five years and information from the above sources is used to improve future management.

### **Information, research and monitoring objective**

Management within the future water collection areas is based on the best information available and is monitored to ensure management practices achieve the best possible result.

### **Information, research and monitoring policies**

10.1 To increase understanding of ecosystems of high ecological value within the future water collection areas through research, monitoring and information-gathering.

### Information and research

- 10.2 To increase understanding of forest values to improve management of the future water collection areas through information gathering.
- 10.3 To acknowledge and incorporate Maori knowledge and values in the management of future water collection areas.
- 10.4 To encourage a greater awareness within the community of the range and significance of ecosystems in the future water collection areas.
- 10.5 To encourage the use of the future water collection areas for environmental education.
- 10.6 To provide for research in the future water collection areas subject to;
  - meeting this plan's policies on 'use, development and management', and
  - any other required consents or approvals are obtained prior to undertaking the research, and
  - a copy of all research undertaken is provided to Greater Wellington.

### Monitoring

- 10.7 To monitor the use and development of the future water collection areas and the resulting effects from management.
- 10.8 To monitor the:
  - locations, nature and extent of pest plant and animal infestations in future water collection areas.
  - results of pest plant and animal control operations in terms of the distribution and size of the pest population.
  - ecological outcomes of pest plant and animal control.
- 10.9 To regularly survey for new pest infestations.
- 10.10 To review this management plan every five years. In the interim, Greater Wellington may determine to review part of, or the entire Plan, in response to:
  - Information from monitoring which indicates the need for a review or change.
  - The identification of new management issues, problem or activity that is not addressed in the Plan but for which policy is required.
  - Changes in national policy including new or amended laws, regulations or other actions, which may render the Plan inoperable or illegal.
  - Policy changes made by Greater Wellington.
  - New land purchased or lands placed under the control of Greater Wellington.

**Good management is reliant on good information, both about the land and its values, as well as the impact of management decisions. Greater Wellington will continue to learn about the areas it manages and review its management techniques in response. This may lead to changes in the methods Greater Wellington chooses to implement the plan or by reviewing the plan itself. Ultimately, regular monitoring and review processes will allow Greater Wellington to determine the success of this plan and its contribution to the regions 'Quality for Life' outcomes.**

Table 5: Monitoring techniques

What will be monitored?	How? (techniques used may change over time)
<p><b>Environmental values</b></p> <p>Health of ecosystems</p> <p>Viability of populations of threatened species</p> <p>Changes in plant pest, invasive plant and animal pest populations over time</p> <p>Environmental Asset Management Program</p> <p>Environmental enhancement</p> <p>Environmental Management Strategy</p>	<p>Ecosystems, habitats, flora and fauna surveys</p> <p>Photographic monitoring</p> <p>Exclosure / permanent forest plots, rare plant monitoring, fruiting and flowering surveys</p> <p>Bird transects</p> <p>Stream monitoring</p> <p>Pest surveys, Insect and pathogen surveys, browse plots</p>
<p><b>Landscape</b></p> <p>Changes in landscape quality over time</p> <p>Effects of park activities on geological features</p>	<p>Photographic surveys, photo point monitoring</p> <p>Visitor satisfaction surveys</p>
<p><b>Cultural heritage</b></p> <p>Condition of cultural heritage resources</p> <p>Threats to cultural heritage resources</p>	<p>Conservation Plans, condition monitoring, HPT permits, photographic surveys, photo point monitoring</p> <p>Visitor satisfaction surveys</p>
<p><b>Use</b></p> <p>Park user satisfaction</p> <p>Diversity of recreation opportunities</p> <p>Cumulative impact of development</p> <p>Popularity of recreational activities</p> <p>Asset management inspections of structures</p>	<p>Visitor satisfaction surveys (biennial), public surveys, focus groups</p> <p>Benchmarking exercises (against similar areas and settings)</p> <p>Reviewing site bookings and permit numbers for camping /hunting/ events/ filming etc.</p> <p>Concession numbers and type.</p>
<p><b>Community values and partnerships</b></p> <p>People’s expectations and preferences of the forests’ uses and protection</p> <p>People’s awareness and understanding of forest resources and values</p> <p>People’s involvement in forests</p> <p>Success of community partnerships</p> <p>Neighbours’ responsiveness to plan</p>	<p>Visitor surveys, visitor satisfaction surveys (biennial), public surveys, Regional outdoors surveys</p> <p>Education programmes – number of participants</p> <p>Number of volunteer groups and days</p>



## Implementation, funding and methods

This management plan sets out a vision and objectives for regional forest management over the next five years. The plan provides direction for forest management within the land's primary function as future water supply areas and protecting the associated environmental and cultural heritage values. Broad parameters are set within which other activities may take place, and processes are established for making management decisions and considering activities and uses. The plan is not designed to determine specific results and does not identify targets. Council processes and systems governing operational aspects forest management will implement the plan.

Many of the objectives and policies contained in this and future plans require Greater Wellington to undertake specific activities. In many cases, Greater Wellington is already doing these; however, others will be new. All activities proposed in this and future plans are subject to scrutiny through the Council's annual planning and budgetary processes, which set performance indicators against which Greater Wellington is measured, monitored and held accountable to the community.

This management plan does not deliver or assure funding to achieve its objectives. Funding is determined through the annual planning processes and may not be available to meet all the objectives and policies of this plan at any one time. Greater Wellington's Long Term Council Community Plan and Annual Plan allocates resources and budget. All local authorities must have an annual plan outlining the nature and scope of activities over the financial year, and how they will be funded. Annual plans determine the rates the regional community pays and is consulted on each year. In preparing this and other plans, Greater Wellington must have regard to costs to the ratepayer. This means that the objectives will not necessarily be achieved immediately, as the pace will be determined by resource and budget limits.

### Methods

There are a range of ways in which this plan will be implemented. One of the most important and certainly most visible is Greater Wellington's ranging service. This service contributes to the area's values by co-ordinating services and resources, providing a visible presence in the forests and advice, as well as addressing health and safety concerns and maintenance requirements.

The Forest Ranger is empowered under the Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972 and the Local Government Act 2002 to enforce bylaws that apply to managing recreation, and other activities undertaken by the public on the forest lands. A copy of the bylaws can be obtained from Greater Wellington offices. Greater Wellington has policies on permits and concessions and these are used to authorise activities in accordance with this plan. Conditions can be imposed on any agreement and bonds held as a guarantee for activities within the forests.

The success of this plan's implementation also rests with the relationships that Greater Wellington fosters with forest neighbours, iwi, the community and agencies such as the Department of Conservation and territorial authorities. Appropriate consultation, information sharing and involving these parties in the decision making and management are therefore integral components of this plan.

Other systems guide the day to day operations and activities essential to administering and maintaining the forests in accordance with this plan's provisions. Systems include:

- *Asset Management System* that determines the service level for buildings, structures, tracks and environmental assets;
- *Environmental and Heritage Asset Management System* that determines the service levels for environmental assets and includes pest management; and
- *Environmental Management System* that set out priorities and actions to implement Greater Wellington's Environmental Policy in the regional parks and forests.

Greater Wellington's daily management actions are guided by annual work plans, ensuring maintenance and services meet required standards, pest animal and plant plans guiding pest control operations and the summer recreation programme. These plans and programmes are consistent with this plan and other Council policies, plans and strategies. Although these plans contribute to this plan's implementation they are also subject to other processes, including the annual planning processes.

A table has been provided overleaf showing how the aims and aspirations will be met in the day to day management of the forests. Although the development of some methods and processes are not part of this plan, they are central to this plan's implementation. Many of the methods fulfil statutory functions and responsibilities and are governed under different legislative and regulatory frameworks. However, excluding these methods from the plan would provide an incomplete picture of the area's management and they are therefore identified here for the sake of completeness.

Table 6: Implementation Methods

Implementation Methods	Plan objectives and policies achieved by methods									
	Water Supply	Environment	Landscape	Heritage	Use	Recreation	Community	Tangata Whenua	Monitor & Review	
Regulatory Methods										
Bylaws	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Concessions Policy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Natural Materials policies	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Hunting permits	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓
Resource Consents	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4WD permits										
Non Regulatory Methods										
Ranging staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interpretation – including signage, publications, brochures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Infrastructure - provision	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓
Health and Safety system	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Motorised Recreational User Code and Guidelines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Participating in relevant RMA processes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Asset Management Programme	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Volunteers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional Outdoors Programme and other events		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Environmental education programmes	✓	✓			✓	✓				
Environmental Asset Management Plan, including pest action plans and baseline monitoring	✓	✓							✓	✓
Parks and Forests' Environmental Management Strategy		✓							✓	✓
Heritage Asset Management Programme and heritage conservation plans				✓					✓	✓
Complying with all Historic Places Act provisions/permits	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Monitoring use and development, and any resulting effects.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Good relationships with landowners, local and central government, Tangata Whenua, neighbours, & utility providers.	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓