



## Accessible places in regional parks

### Easy places to visit

All within an hour's drive of Wellington City, the regional parks are unique natural areas for recreation, conservation or just taking time out.

Since the late 1990s, Greater Wellington has been upgrading tracks and other facilities in the parks to make them accessible to a wider range of people.

As a result, there are now several tracks that may be negotiated by people with limited mobility or in wheelchairs. Other tracks are suitable for disabled people with assistance. Toilets in the parks are now almost all wheelchair accessible.

### Battle Hill Farm Forest Park



Picnic in corner paddock – Jessica Dewsnap

Site of one of the last battles between Maori and colonial forces in the region, Battle Hill blends traditional hill country farming, forestry and environmental restoration. With its mix of flat and steeper country it is popular for walking, biking, horse riding, camping and picnicking.

The Ken Gray Education Centre is reached via a wheelchair accessible ramp over the sheep yards. There are wheelchair accessible toilets by the carpark and at the campground.

### Suggested activities

**Easy** – picnic in the homestead gardens or by the stream; walk around the front paddocks and over to the historic graveyard (note there are cattle stops en route).

**With assistance** – try the Bush Reserve Short Loop. Walk up the farm road towards the new wetlands. Take the track into Swampy Gully to see the planting area.

**With groups** – contact the park ranger to arrange a free group visit, meeting the farm animals and learning more about the park history.

### Hutt River Trail

Running from Petone's Hikoikoi Reserve to Te Marua north of Upper Hutt, the Hutt River Trail is a reminder of the early Maori foot tracks alongside Te Awa Kairangi (the Hutt River).

Most of the Hutt River Trail surface is gravel. However, the section from Melling to the Estuary Bridge has been sealed. There are several steeper grade ramps from the Riverbank car park to the Trail on top of the stopbank near Lower Hutt City centre. Watch for cycles at peak commuter times. Note there are very few public toilets close to the Trail at this point.



On the Trail just south of Lower Hutt City centre

### Suggested activities

**Easy** – from the Randwick Crescent carpark, follow the Trail south to Estuary Bridge at Waione Street and return the same way.

**With assistance** - follow the Trail from the Riverbank carpark along to Ewen, Ava or Estuary Bridges and Hikoikoi Reserve. Return the same way. From Randwick Cres, follow the Trail north via two underpasses to Lower Hutt City Centre.

**With groups** – contact the river ranger to arrange a presentation about the river trail and recreational opportunities near the Hutt River.

## Kaitoke Regional Park

Only 45 minutes north of Wellington City, Kaitoke Regional Park features centuries old rata, rimu and beech forest. The park was the scene of "Rivendell" in the Lord of the Rings trilogy.

Nearly half of Wellington's water is drawn from the Hutt River within the park. As a result, there are several sealed vehicle-free tracks. All toilets are wheelchair accessible.



Easy walking track to the Strainer House

### Suggested activities

**Easy** – picnic in Rivendell, a short distance from the carpark. Follow the sealed access road to the weir, the collection point for Wellington's water.

**With assistance** – take the track through to the Rivendell film site (fine gravel surface). Follow the path through to the Strainer House and Flume Bridge. Detour en route via the Terrace Walk through rata/ rimu forest.

**With groups** – contact the park ranger for a talk about Kaitoke's temperate rainforest and birdlife. Book the BBQ shelter (for a small fee) for a group picnic.

## Queen Elizabeth Park

The last area of relatively natural dunes on the Kapiti coastline, Queen Elizabeth's Park sandy beaches, warm climate and easy terrain make it our most popular regional park. Offering plenty of space for walking, picnics, swimming, fishing, cycling and group events, the park is the site of two historic pa and once housed up to 20,000 US Marines during World War II.



New loos at Paekakariki; picnic near the beach

### Suggested activities

**Easy** – take the short Pukeko Path in the MacKays Crossing wetlands near the ranger's office and follow with a picnic. Visit the Tram Museum (11.30am – 4.30pm weekends and public holidays) and the US Marines display further along Whareroa Road. Picnic at the Paekakariki entrance area or Whareroa Beach.

**With assistance** – follow the sealed roadways from the Paekakariki entrance to Wainui Beach, and at Whareroa amongst the dunes. The beach is accessible via a sandy track at the northern end of the Whareroa Beach car park. Cross the paddock near the Marines display to visit the nearby wetlands, first planted in 2003.

**With groups** – book a picnic site at Whareroa Beach or at Paekakariki (for a small fee). Space is available there for organised activities.

## Tunnel Gully Recreation Area

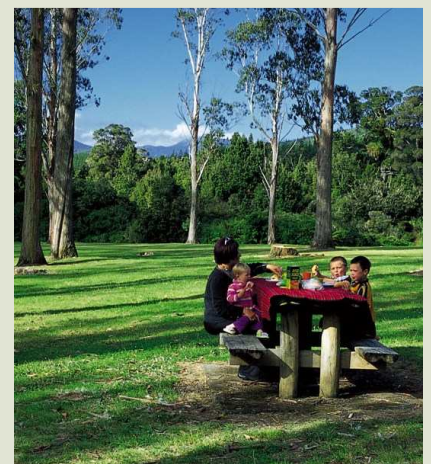
Named for its link with the historic Rimutaka railway line between Wellington and the Wairarapa, Tunnel Gully features the 221m long Mangaroa Tunnel, built between 1875 and 1877. The tunnel's working life ended in 1955 when the new Rimutaka Tunnel was opened.

Toilets at the lower car park are wheelchair accessible. Open grassy areas are ideal for picnics. Young children enjoy paddling in the small swimming hole near the lower picnic area.

### Suggested activities

**Easy** – picnic areas are adjacent to the lower and upper car parks.

**With assistance** – from the lower car park, follow the left branch of Tane's Track through mature podocarp/ tawa forest. Turn right onto the access road and after some 100m back onto the track. You can visit the Mangaroa Tunnel en route or via the upper picnic area.



Picnic at Tunnel Gully – Jessica Dewsnap

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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