

Park-specific management and policies
Pakuratahi Forest



6.6 Pakuratahi Forest

6.6.1 Legal status

Title held:	Wellington Regional Council
Legislative status:	Administered under Local Government Act 2002, Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972 (for water supply and recreation Some land gifted by Forest and Bird which is to be gazetted as reserve under the Reserves Act 1977.
Territorial Authority:	Upper Hutt City Council

The land is held fee simple for the purposes of recreation, forestry and water supply, vested pursuant to the Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972, and subject also to the Wellington Regional Council (Water Board Functions) Act 2005.

Refer to Appendix 2 for a legal description of land parcels.

6.6.2 Background

Pakuratahi Forest covers the western side of the Rimutaka Ranges north of Upper Hutt and includes land in the Kaitoke basin, as well as the Pakuratahi catchment area. It can be accessed from a number of points: Maymorn Railway Station in Upper Hutt, Plateau Road (Tunnel Gully), places along State Highway 2, and also Cross Creek (Featherston) through the Rimutaka Forest Park. At just over 8,000 hectares, this future water collection area forms a link with the Hutt and Wainuiomata catchments. Unlike Akatarawa Forest, Pakuratahi is one large catchment and is generally steeper. Exotic plantation stands are found mainly in the central part of the forest, just south of State Highway 2 (approximately

775 hectares). It contains both original and regenerating indigenous vegetation and has important environmental, cultural and heritage values, as well as providing recreation opportunities.

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

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 formation is registered under the Historic Places Act and includes a number of tunnels at Mangaroa and the Summit.

As with neighbouring Kaitoke Regional Park, Māori sites of significance are limited as there were few early permanent Māori settlements in the area. Māori moved through the area travelling to the Wairarapa and the west coast. It was an area of mahinga kai used for hunting birds and fishing, as well as gathering forest foods and materials. Ngāti Toa Rangātira and the various Wellington based Taranaki iwi retain mana whenua over the lands.

Pakuratahi Forest provides both a destination and also a recreational link between Kaitoke Regional Park (via the underpass on State Highway 2) and Cross Creek, and Rimutaka Forest Park (managed by the Department of Conservation) The easy gradient of the Rimutaka Rail Trail (on the western side) is popular for walking and biking and continues into Cross Creek on the eastern side. Summer provides the opportunity to swim in Pakuratahi River running adjacent to the trail. The Tunnel

Gully area is also popular for picnicking, events and short walks. The Mangaroa forest area is often used by horse riders.

On Mt Climie there are a number of leases for communication masts which form an important part of the Region's communication infrastructure. The road to these masts is maintained by those who own them.

For more information refer to the resource statement documents.

6.6.3 Key park characteristics

Land

- Future water supply area
- Part of a contiguous link with the Hutt and Wainuiomata catchments
- Unique ecological features of beech stands, wetland habitat and snow tussock
- Mt Climie ridgeline as a prominent backdrop to Upper Hutt and surrounds
- Examples of altitudinal changes in vegetation.

People

- Historic railway formation and associated structures (tunnel and bridges)
- Recreational opportunities for walkers and mountain bikers in Tunnel Gully and on the Rimutaka Rail Trail from Maymorn to Summit Tunnel
- Productive landscape (commercial forestry).

6.6.4 Management focus

The primary focus for Pakuratahi Forest is to:

1. Ensure the water resource within the future water collection area is healthy and that its potential as a sustainable source of secure, fresh and clean water for the region in the future is protected
2. Provide for water supply infrastructure as required.

Secondary focus for Pakuratahi Forest is to:

3. Protect the native forest for biodiversity purposes
4. Preserve its heritage features
5. Manage Pakuratahi for production forestry on a rotational basis
6. Provide a range of recreational opportunities
7. Undertake no significant new developments other than for water supply purposes.

6.6.5 Specific policies

Biodiversity and ecosystems

- a. To have particular regard for the high priority indigenous areas when determining ecosystem protection and enhancement priorities as listed in Table 7.

Landscape and geological features

- b. To protect the park's key landscape features and values from inappropriate use and development, specifically:
 - The Mt Climie ridgeline as the backdrop to Upper Hutt City and northern skyline of Wellington city
 - Areas of the Pakuratahi Forest visible from State Highway 2
 - The upper Pakuratahi valley as a remote wilderness area that is largely unmodified.

Cultural heritage

- c. To protect significant modified landscape features of the Rimutaka rail formation and any associated historic structures from inappropriate use or development. This includes:
 - Setting aside buffer zones of permanent indigenous vegetation on either side of the Rimutaka Rail Trail
 - When replanting exotic forests leaving 40 metres setback on either side of the railway formation

- Retaining existing exotic forests which have the primary purpose of protecting unstable slopes where they are more effective than indigenous vegetation.

Land management

- d. To allow for the development of water utilities, eg, pipelines, treatment facilities, water storage or associated infrastructure.

Visitor services

- e. To allow public access on foot to all parts of the forest, subject to temporary or localised restrictions where plantation forestry operations are taking place or for other management purposes.
- f. To offer varied opportunities for regional forest users by providing multiple use tracks and facilities, where possible, appropriate and compatible with the primary management outcome of future water supply.
- g. To allow horse access in designated areas, west of the Tunnel Gully Recreation Area, subject to periodic or localised restrictions for management purposes. Horses are not allowed through tunnels or other parts of the Pakuratahi Forest.
- h. To manage the following as main park entrances:
 - Tunnel Gully (Plateau Road, Upper Hutt)
 - Rimutaka Rail Trail entrance – off State Highway 2.
- i. To maintain the following as secondary entrances to the park:
 - Summit Tunnel, (Rimutaka Forest Park – Department of Conservation)
 - Maymorn, (Upper Hutt)
 - State Highway 2 Underpass (Kaitoke Hill).

- j. To manage the following areas as recreation areas:

- Rimutaka Trig Track
- Rimutaka Rail Trail
- Summit Rail Yards
- Tunnel Gully recreation area.

Partnership in parks

- k. To recognise Ngāti Toa Rangatira and the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust's relationship to the forest through:
 - Participation with assessments of the significance of features of the forest
 - Identification of the traditional trails through the forest.
- l. To support a partnership approach to maintaining the Pakuratahi catchment through:
 - Maintaining water quality of the Pakuratahi catchment
 - Protecting and enhancing the indigenous forest cover and insect and bird life
 - Maintaining the habitat for indigenous fish.
- m. To liaise with, in regard to decision making, Upper Hutt City Council, New Zealand Historic Places Trust and the Department of Conservation on the management and use of the land to provide an integrated approach to environmental management programmes and recreational activities.
- n. To ensure that any new partnerships contribute to advocacy, restoration or education outcomes for Pakuratahi Forest.
- o. To undertake liaison with the Department of Conservation to improve public access and make suitable family cycling available between Cross Creek and Lake Wairarapa.

Table 7 - Significant indigenous environmental areas and features - Pakuratahi Forest

AREA	DESCRIPTION	REASONS FOR SIGNIFICANCE
General	Indigenous bird, fish and invertebrate habitat	Threatened species: Kaka (nationally endangered) New Zealand falcon (nationally vulnerable) kereru (gradual decline) yellow crowned kākārīki (gradual decline) long finned eel (gradual decline) giant kokopu (gradual decline) dwarf galaxiids (gradual decline) koura (gradual decline).
Climie Peaks Nos 1 and 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</i> var <i>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 affnervosa</i> (undescribed 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 PASAC8 for protection as an extension to the Bawbaw Ecological Area 1985. Also identified as a SSWI for its significant wildlife values.
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.
Pakuratahi Ladle Bend Wetland	Manuka Wetland	This wetland is regionally significant in terms of habitat type.

AREA	DESCRIPTION	REASONS FOR SIGNIFICANCE
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</i> var <i>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.

6.6.6 Projected changes

Refer to Map 15 (following pages).

- Promote integration with the Hutt River Trail (Te Marua) for mountain-biking through the Maymorn entrance.
- Investigate better links with the Wairarapa and Lake Wairarapa through the Rimutaka Rail Trail and Rimutaka Forest Park.
- Improved forest health through pest control programmes.

6.6.7 Park maps

The following pages contain:

- Map 14: Pakuratahi Forest in 2010
- Map 15: Pakuratahi Forest projected future changes.

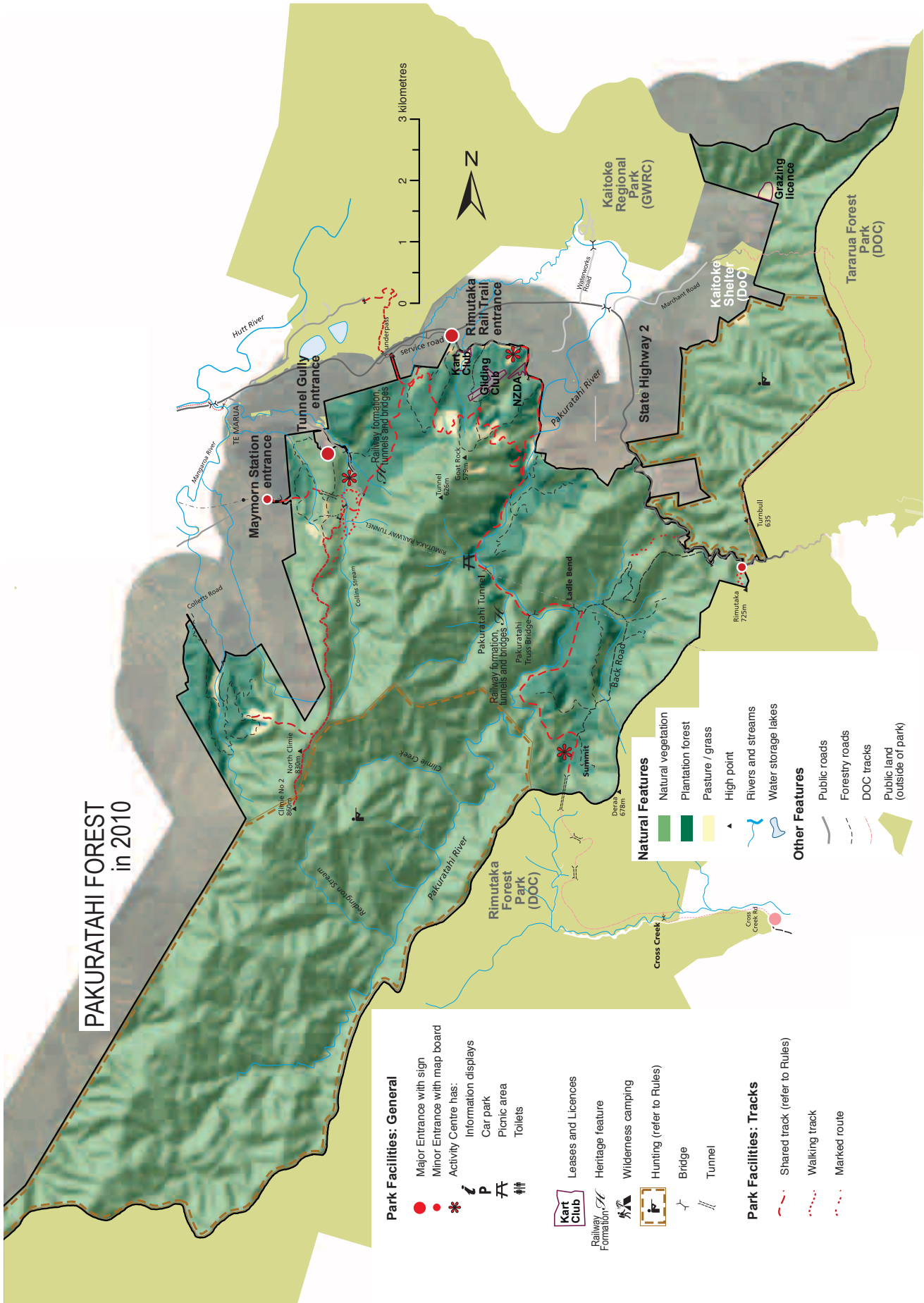
For more information

Greater Wellington Plantation Forest Working Plan 2000-2010 (for information on the forestry operations including harvesting)

Regional Forest Lands Resource Statement (Greater Wellington, 2008)

Ecological Assessment of selected ridgelines in Pakuratahi Forest: Mount Climie Area (Froude, 2004)

PAKURATAHI FOREST in 2010



Park Facilities: General

- Major Entrance with sign
- Minor Entrance with map board
- * Activity Centre has:
 - Information displays
 - Car park
 - Picnic area
 - Toilets



- Leases and Licences
- Heritage feature
- Wilderness camping
- Hunting (refer to Rules)
- Bridge
- Tunnel

Park Facilities: Tracks

- Shared track (refer to Rules)
- Walking track
- Marked route

Natural Features

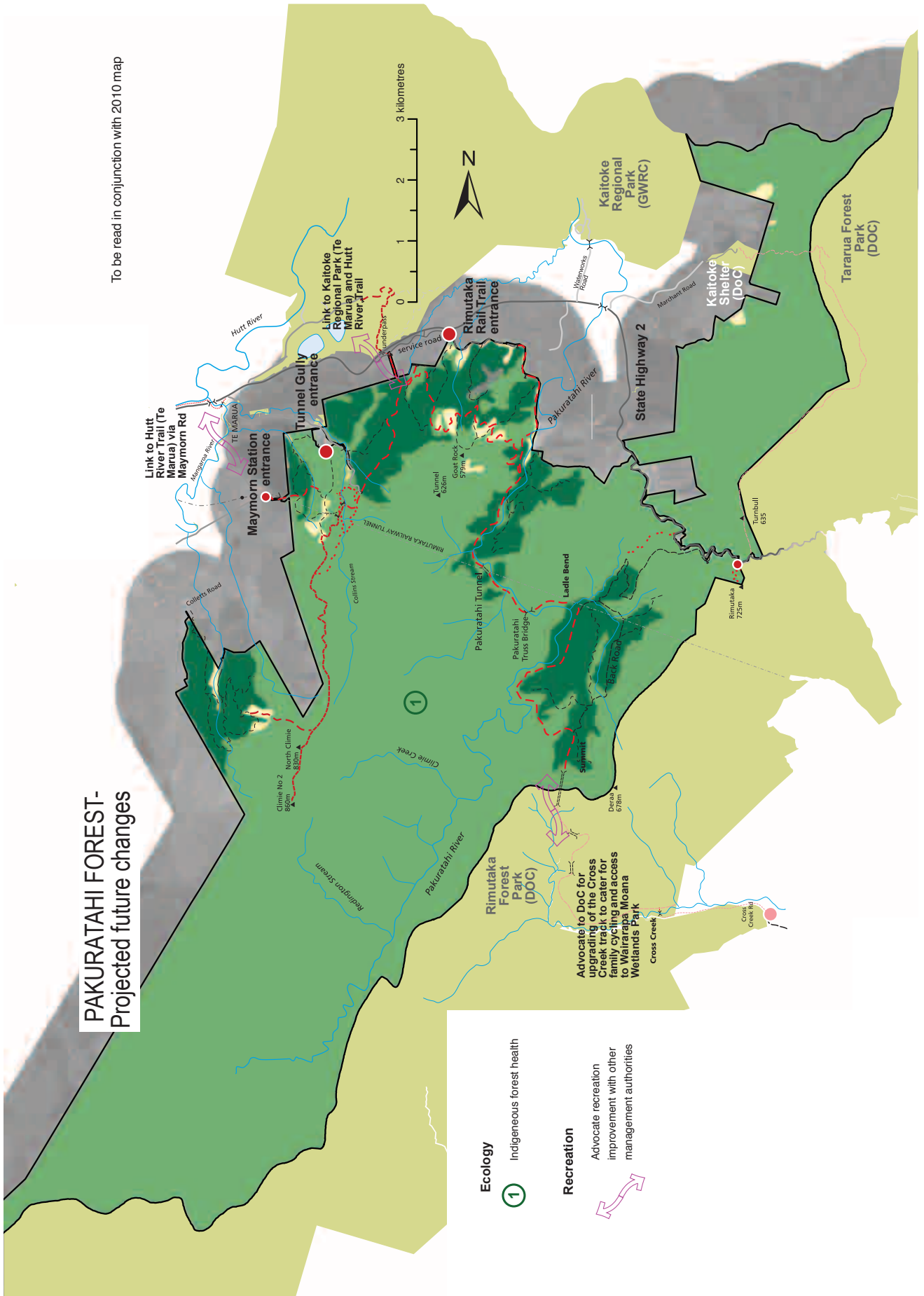
- Natural vegetation
- Plantation forest
- Pasture / grass
- High point
- Rivers and streams
- Water storage lakes

Other Features

- Public roads
- Forestry roads
- DOC tracks
- Public land (outside of park)

PAKURATAHI FOREST- Projected future changes

To be read in conjunction with 2010 map



Ecology

- ① Indigenous forest health

Recreation

Advocate recreation improvement with other management authorities



