



WAINUIOMATA WATER COLLECTION AREA

Guided walking tour

About the forest

The headwaters of the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo Rivers provide about 15% of the Wellington metropolitan area's water supply. Since the early 1900s, the area has been closed to the public to protect water quality. Modern treatment methods now make managed public access possible.

The Water Collection Area is rugged, mountainous terrain broken by many streams and narrow, steep-sided ridges. Never logged, the area contains outstanding scenery and some nationally significant remnants of lowland podocarp forest. This environment and the water it provides to the region require careful management. It is maintained as a remote area with few facilities for recreation.

Just downstream of the treatment plant is the Wainuiomata Waterworks Recreation Area. Open to the public, this area is an inviting spot for swimming, walking, biking and picnics.

History of the water supply

The water supply potential of these lush forests and clear rivers was recognised as early as 1878 when an earth dam was built on the Wainuiomata River and a pipeline laid to Wellington.

Developments since that time include the construction of the Morton Dam in 1912, water collection weirs and a pipeline tunnel from the Orongorongo Valley in 1926, and a simple water treatment plant in 1964.

By the late 1980s the system had reached the end of its useful working life. The Morton Dam was decommissioned and the lake drained in 1989. In 1993 a new treatment plant was built taking water from weirs in both Wainuiomata and Orongorongo Rivers. The new plant produces up to 60 million litres of high quality water per day and supplies a fifth of the water used by the greater Wellington metropolitan area.

Caring for your water

To preserve the forest and protect our water supply from contamination:

- **Do not enter the catchment if you have had any gastric problems, e.g. diarrhoea in the last two weeks.**
- **Keep to the roads** and formed tracks.
- **Light no fires.** Take care with portable stoves, matches and cigarettes.
- **Pack in and pack out.** Take your rubbish home and recycle where possible.
- **Use the toilets** by the Water Treatment Plant car park. There are no toilet facilities within the catchment boundary.
- **Do not remove, disturb or damage native plants or animals.** Do not disturb vegetation research plots and markers.

Please co-operate with the rangers and follow their instructions.

Sensitive areas and intakes remain closed at all times. Keep clear of the Wainuiomata River immediately upstream of the intake, George Creek intakes and the pipeline tunnel.

Tour requirements

Dress for the bush environment. You will need a backpack, rain jacket, extra warm clothing, sun hat, sun block, something waterproof to sit on at the lunch stop and any personal medication. Wear tramping boots for small stream crossings.

Carry enough personal food and drink for the day's walk. There will be a lunch break during the tour.

Be prepared for sudden weather changes.

Keep away from marked hazards. Do not enter or climb on guard rails, barriers, fences or water supply structures.

Introductory talk

Rangers will introduce the tour, discuss the catchment and hazards, reconfirm what you need and answer questions before the tour starts at approximately 9.30am. We will visit the pipe tunnel, George's Creek and Wainuiomata River Valley. A cup of tea and video is provided at the conclusion of your visit.

Tour duration

Meet the ranger at the main gate at 9am.

The walk is an easy grade and is approximately 11km. Tour times vary but most groups return before 2.30pm.

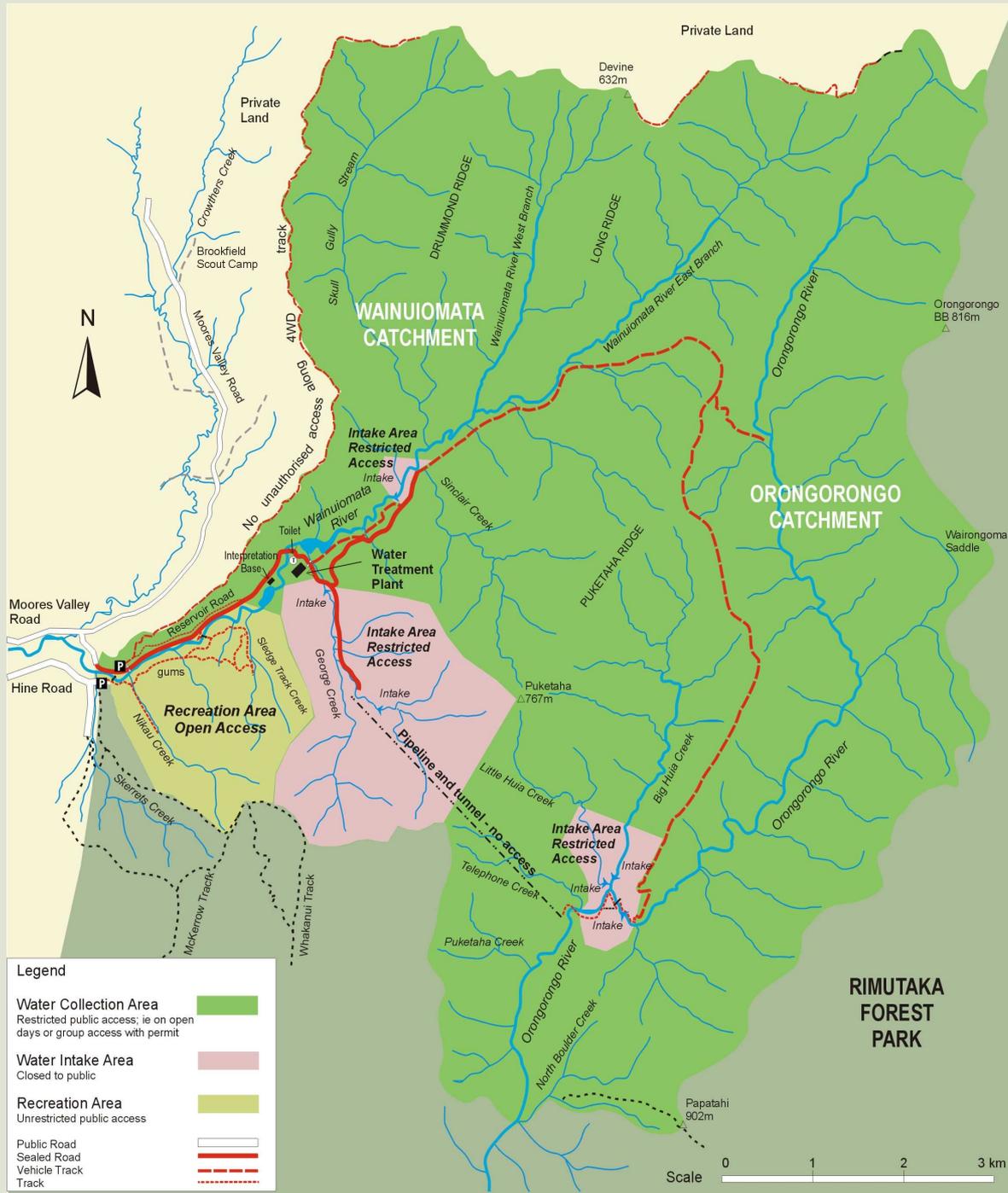
Cancellation

We reserve the right to cancel tours if necessary e.g. adverse weather conditions or catchment management emergencies.

How to get there

Follow the main road through Wainuiomata and turn left at the roundabout into Moores Valley Road. Take the first turn right into Whitcher Grove and follow this to the Recreation Area.

We will provide you with safe parking onsite. The ranger will show you where to park on your arrival.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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