



# GREATER WELLINGTON PARKS

## DRAFT REGIONAL PARKS NETWORK MANAGEMENT PLAN

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# Contents

<b>Chairperson’s Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
The Future of Our Parks – Our Vision	4
Purpose of this Network Management Plan	4
How to Use this Document – Overview of the Plan	5
<b>Section 1: Wellington Regional Parks – An Overview</b>	<b>6</b>
Regional Parks in Context	7
Parks – Places Worth Keeping	11
The Relationship of Regional Parks to Other Public Lands	12
Working Towards the Vision	15
Planning for Success	18
Consultation to Date	19
<b>Section 2: The Plan for Greater Wellington Parks</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Part A – Conserving our Environment and Cultural Heritage</b>	<b>22</b>
Sustaining our Environment	23
Preserving Landscapes	30
Protecting Cultural Heritage	32
<b>Part B – Sustaining Community, Recreational and Commercial Opportunities and Use</b>	<b>37</b>
Providing Opportunities	38
Managing Use to Protect Values	40
<b>Part C – Partnerships in Parks</b>	<b>48</b>
Involving Local Communities and Neighbours	49
Working Together with Tangata Whenua	51
<b>Appendix 1 – Relevant Legislation</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Appendix 2 – Acquisition of Council-Owned Land within Regional Parks</b>	<b>62</b>

## Chairperson's Foreword

We are fortunate in the Greater Wellington region to have many parks and reserves, from small neighbourhood parks to large areas of native forest. These areas provide us with opportunities for rest, relaxation or more active pursuits. They contribute greatly to our sense of place and our quality of life.

Greater Wellington's regional parks are an important part of this spectrum alongside the lands managed by local authorities and the Department of Conservation for the people of the region. Our five regional parks encompass a range of environments, such as our coast, native forest and open hill country, and provide many opportunities for recreation, from walking to mountain biking and horse riding. Regional parks also protect special parts of our landscape, cultural heritage and natural environment that have become rare and in some cases under threat through human activities.

Although we want to protect the environmental and heritage values of the parks, we don't want to "lock" the parks up. Parks are for people and we want to encourage greater use of the parks by the community, provided these uses are compatible with key values and uses of the parks. We also want to ensure that both Tangata Whenua and the community in general – who have important relationships with the regional parks – are appropriately involved in their use and management.

That is why this network management plan is so crucial. Management plans guide the long-term management of the lands they cover and provide the opportunity for the community to have a say in how these lands are managed and used. They ensure that the important values of the regional parks are considered when making decisions about land uses, developments or activities, and they provide direction about how conflicting demands and values should be addressed.

This network management plan is the first step in the review of all our regional park management plans, and represents a new approach for the Council to planning for the future of our parks. For the first time we have developed an overarching management framework that sets out the future direction for management of all our regional parks. This plan provides a structure for addressing issues common to all parks in a consistent and comprehensive way.

Following this network management plan, park-specific plans will be developed that provide the detailed management proposals for each park, consistent with the direction set in the network management plan. This network management plan will not tell you where you can ride a bike in a particular park – the park-specific plans will provide that level of detail. Work on the park specific plans will begin in July – starting with the plans for Belmont Regional Park and East Harbour Regional Park.

I would like to thank all those people who have contributed to the development of this plan with time, ideas and suggestions. We feel it provides a solid basis for managing our regional parks into the future. We look forward to your comments on how well we have achieved this goal.

Margaret Shields  
Chairperson, Greater Wellington – The Regional Council

# Introduction

## The Future of Our Parks – Our Vision

*To enhance quality of life in the Wellington region by providing regional parks where:*

- *Our environment and cultural heritage are protected for current and future generations.*
- *People can fully and actively use, recreate in, enjoy and learn from these lands in a sustainable manner.*
- *The community is actively involved.*
- *Tangata Whenua interests are respected.*

This vision recognises that:

- Regional parks are part of a network of lands managed (but not necessarily owned or occupied) by Greater Wellington – The Regional Council, containing resources that are, and will increasingly be, important for the long-term sustainable future of the region and its people.
- Regional parks need to protect our environment<sup>1</sup>, cultural heritage, and legitimate activities. In addition, they need to offer recreational experiences and opportunities for community use and enjoyment, in ways that provide for the needs of current and future generations.
- Continuing and enhancing community involvement in and education and enjoyment of the parks by providing opportunities to visit and learn about them is a fundamental purpose of their management.
- Tangata Whenua maintain strong links with, and interests in, the lands on which regional parks are established.

## Purpose of this Network Management Plan

This network management plan sets out the direction for managing the regional parks in the Wellington region. It provides a framework for addressing issues common to all regional parks and managing them in a comprehensive and consistent way. Park-specific management plans will be developed to provide detailed policy for each park, consistent with the direction set in this network management plan.

In developing this plan, we have looked ahead to identify the important challenges and changes that may face regional parks, and how we will manage them. The plan will be reviewed as necessary, providing an opportunity to assess our objectives and consider new issues and circumstances, and ensure that it continues to be relevant and provides a clear direction to guide park management into the future.

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of environment is taken from the Resource Management Act 1991: “‘Environment’ includes--- (a) Ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities; and (b) All natural and physical resources; and (c) Amenity values; and (d) The social, economic, aesthetic, and cultural conditions which affect the matters stated in paragraphs (a) to (c) of this definition or which are affected by those matters”.

## **How to Use this Document – Overview of the Plan**

### **Section 1 – Wellington Regional Parks – An Overview**

This explains the role of Greater Wellington – The Regional Council, our vision for the region, and why we have regional parks. It provides important background on the values and benefits of regional parks and forests.

### **Section 2 – The Plan for Greater Wellington Parks**

This section sets out how we will manage the regional parks to protect the environment and cultural heritage values and provide for sustainable use. It is divided into three main parts:

#### **Part A – Conserving our Environment and Cultural Heritage**

Sustaining our Environment  
Preserving Landscapes  
Protecting Cultural Heritage

#### **Part B – Sustaining Community, Recreational and Commercial Opportunities and Use**

Providing Opportunities  
Managing Use to Protect Values

#### **Part C – Partnerships in Parks**

Involving Local Communities and Neighbours  
Working Together with Tangata Whenua

Each of these parts contains:

- A context section to explain briefly the background and our approach.
- Objectives – our broad aims for the parks.
- Policies – what we will do to achieve our aims.

## Section 1: Wellington Regional Parks – An Overview



## **Regional Parks in Context**

### **The Role of Greater Wellington - The Regional Council**

Greater Wellington - The Regional Council has two closely related roles of environmental and land management. It has an important role in looking after the region's natural resources, like air, soil and water, so that these are sustained for the needs and enjoyment of our own and future generations. Our specific responsibilities include environment management, flood protection and land management, provision of regional parks, public transport planning and funding, and delivering drinking water to the cities of the Wellington metropolitan area.

We manage and care for large areas of land containing resources that are important for the long-term sustainable future of the region and its people, including:

- Regional parks – to provide the community with outdoor recreation opportunities, and for environmental and heritage management and protection.
- Regional forests – for use as future water collection areas, plantation forestry, recreational access, and environmental and heritage management and protection.
- Water collection areas – from which water is collected to supply much of the western part of the region.
- River corridors – for flood protection, recreational access, and environmental and heritage management and protection.

The Regional Council has historically had a role in land and environmental management, through its roles in water supply provision, soil conservation and regional parks. However, the introduction of the Resource Management Act 1991 gave the Council new roles and responsibilities for ensuring sustainable management of natural resources across the region. This responsibility extends to all lands (both private and public) and natural resources in the region, including those that the Council is responsible for managing.

Many of the areas under Council management are important to the region's biological diversity and ecosystem functioning, some contain sites of historic and cultural heritage importance, and many have significant public value for use and recreation. In carrying out its roles as land manager, the Council has regard to its wider management responsibilities and other land and resource managers in the region, to ensure that the region's resources are sustained to meet the needs of the community both now and in the future.

### **Wellington's Regional Parks**

Wellington's regional parks were established in response to an identified need for "semi-remote" outdoor recreation opportunities, particularly on the fringe of urban areas. They provide accessible open space and recreational opportunities for the regional community while protecting important landscape, heritage and environmental values. The Council manages five regional parks (see Map 1)

- Queen Elizabeth Park (on the Kapiti Coast).
- Battle Hill Farm Forest Park (on the Paekakariki Hill Road).
- Belmont Regional Park (on the hills between Wellington, Lower Hutt and Porirua).
- Kaitoke Regional Park (north of Upper Hutt off State Highway 2).
- East Harbour Regional Park – Pencarrow (on the hills behind Eastbourne and Baring Head).

This network management plan covers these five regional parks only. Other Council lands are addressed through a range of other management plans.

### Legal Status

The Local Government Act 1974 empowered the Council to hold, manage and purchase land for regional parks to protect natural, environmental, landscape, educational, heritage and archaeological values or for its recreational significance or potential. This Act has since been replaced by the Local Government Act 2002.

The 2002 Act provides a new framework for local authorities to play a broad role in promoting the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their communities through a sustainable development approach. While the 2002 Act replaces much of the 1974 Act, the provisions from the 1974 Act relating to Wellington regional parks have been retained for five years. For the next five years, Wellington's regional parks will be managed according to the specific provisions of the 1974 Act relating to regional parks and the more general principles for local authorities established in the 2002 Act.

All five parks are designated as regional parks under the Local Government Act 1974, but some areas are also reserves under the Reserves Act 1977 (see Table 1 below and Map 1). The majority of reserves are recreation reserves, with some areas of scenic, historic and local purpose reserve. The whole of Queen Elizabeth Park, along with parts of Belmont and East Harbour Regional Parks are recreation reserves. The Reserves Act specifies allowed uses of areas that are linked closely to the purpose of the reserve.

### Requirement for Management Plans

The Reserves Act 1977 and the Local Government Act 1974 both require the Council to develop park management plans. This network management plan, along with subsequent park-specific plans, will meet those requirements. The Local Government Act 2002 does not require park management plans to be developed. However, as many areas of regional parks are also reserves, the Council will still be required to develop plans.

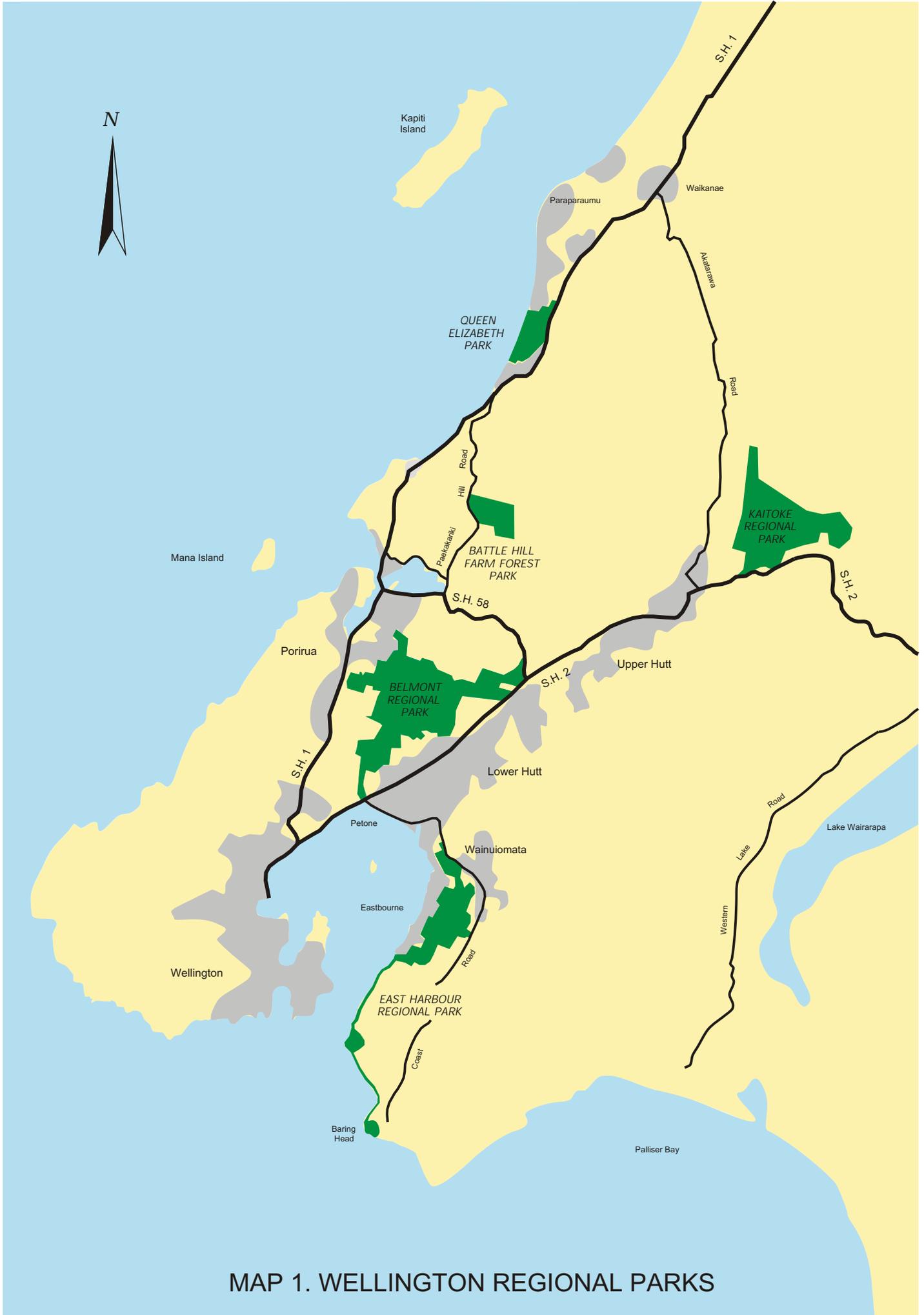
### Ownership Status

While the Regional Council manages the five regional parks, it does not own or occupy all the land within them. For example, Queen Elizabeth Park is owned by the Crown, and the Regional Council has been appointed to control and manage it as a regional park, while Belmont Regional Park and East Harbour Regional Park both contain land owned by other agencies.

**Table 1: Legal and Ownership Status of the Regional Parks**

Regional Park	Title Held By	Legislative Status
Battle Hill Farm Forest Park	Wellington Regional Council	Regional Park under Local Government Act 1974.
Belmont Regional Park	Porirua City Council Wellington City Council Wellington Regional Council Landcorp Farming Hutt City Council Department of Conservation (Wellington Regional Council appointed to control and manage)	Regional Park under Local Government Act 1974. Parts under Reserves Act 1977: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wellington City Council, Department of Conservation and Porirua City Council lands are all recreation reserve.</li> <li>Hutt City Council land soon to be declared recreation reserve (Kilmister).</li> <li>Some Hutt City Council land at Korokoro is also local purpose reserve for drainage purposes.</li> </ul> There are also walkways under the Walkways Act 1990 across Landcorp farm. Wellington Regional Council manages the walkway.
East Harbour Regional Park	Hutt City Council Department of Conservation (Wellington Regional Council and Hutt City Council appointed to control and manage some of Department of Conservation lands) Wellington Regional Council	Regional Park under Local Government Act 1974. Majority is also Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977. Some other parts may be scenic reserve, local purpose reserve or historic reserve.
Queen Elizabeth Park	Department of Conservation (Wellington Regional Council appointed to control and manage)	Regional Park under Local Government Act 1974. Whole park is also Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977.
Kaitoke Regional Park	Wellington Regional Council	Regional Park under Local Government Act 1974.





MAP 1. WELLINGTON REGIONAL PARKS

## **Parks – Places Worth Keeping**

### **Parks Protect Unique and Diverse Values**

Each park provides a different experience and contains unique features and values. For example:

- Kaitoke Regional Park – high-quality indigenous forest, bush walks, rivers, rare plants and animals, native fish, water supply facilities, opportunities for swimming, camping, rafting and picnicking.
- Belmont Regional Park – wide open spaces and hilltops, excellent views, rare geckos, World War II heritage features, opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- Battle Hill Farm Forest Park – a working farm and plantation forestry area, educational opportunities, a New Zealand Wars site, indigenous forest remnant, opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- Queen Elizabeth Park – sandy beaches, coastal dune systems, rare native fish, World War II and Maori archaeological features, indigenous forest remnant, opportunities for picnicking, walking and cycling.
- East Harbour Regional Park – a rugged rocky shore, lakes and wetlands, beech forest, rare plants and animals, Maori archaeological features, historic lighthouses, opportunities for walking and cycling.

### **Parks Conserve Cultural and Scenic Values**

Parks protect natural, scenic and cultural values that contribute significantly to the identity of the Wellington region and its people. The parks conserve important natural areas such as native bush, wetlands and dunes which are home to many unique plants and animals.

Scenic landscapes, cultural values and historic sites in parks represent the living history of our relationships with the land. All these values are special and irreplaceable parts of our identity and should be protected for future generations.

Tangata Whenua maintain links with the lands on which the parks have been established. The parks contain many areas and values of significance to Tangata Whenua, who continue to have interests in the lands, consistent with the Council's statutory governance and management role and reasonable public use and enjoyment.

Parks provide important open spaces near urban areas and contribute to the scenic backdrop of the region. By protecting a diversity of landscapes, they provide an important opportunity for people in the region to experience, enjoy and connect with our natural and cultural heritage.

### **Parks Give Social and Economic Benefits**

Our children visit the parks through their schools to learn how to look after the environment. They plant trees there on Arbor Day. Members of the community are involved in projects to protect or restore the natural and historic features of the parks. The parks also provide venues for community and sporting events.

We receive economic benefits from commercial activities that occur at the parks and forests by increasing visitors to the region and providing jobs in recreation or tourism-related areas.

### **Parks Provide Opportunities for Enjoyment and Relaxation**

Parks are popular places for walking, biking and picnics with the family plus a whole lot more. People can relax and enjoy the surroundings, take small or long walks, or engage in more adventurous activities such as mountain biking. Parks can also be places for organised recreation such as guided trips. Together the parks provide a wide range of opportunities for different activities in different environments – from open hilltops to dense forests to coastal dunes.

### **Parks are Important Places to Protect**

As natural places and open space become rarer with increasing urbanisation and development, the challenge for park management is to balance use with the protection of natural and cultural heritage values.

### **The Relationship of Regional Parks to Other Public Lands**

Regional parks are an important recreational and conservation resource alongside local parks, regional forests and water collection areas, forest parks, conservation areas, and our rivers and coastline.

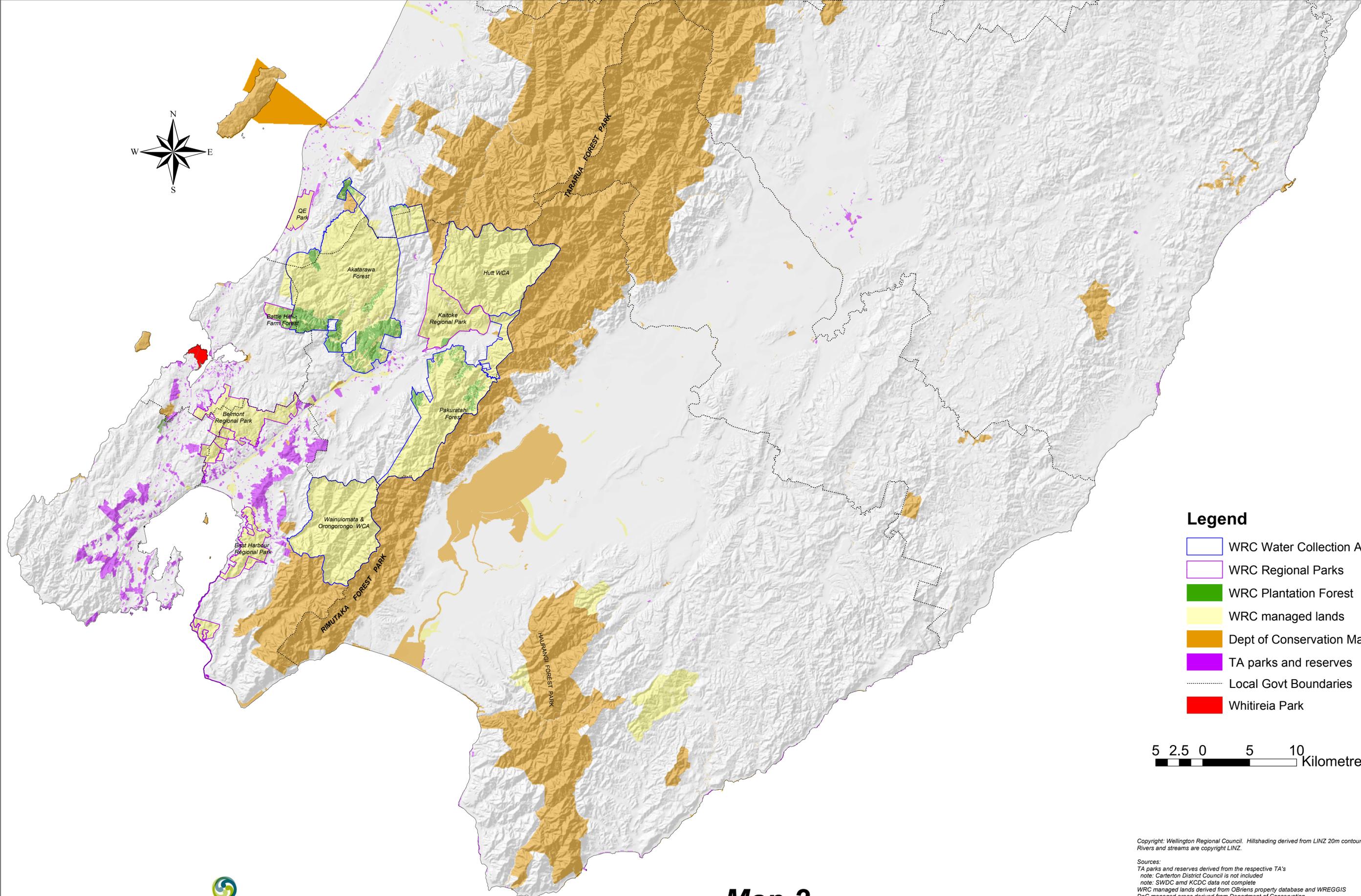
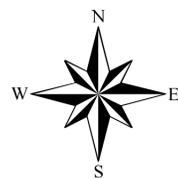
Regional parks are not the only parks and recreation areas available to the community. The Department of Conservation (DoC) and territorial authorities (district councils) also manage a number of parks and reserves for the public, while the Regional Council manages other lands that contribute to recreational opportunities (see Map 2).

The various levels of government provide different opportunities in terms of recreation and conservation, although they overlap to some extent. Each differs in terms of the emphasis it places on recreation and conservation, and the scale and nature of parks it provides, as indicated in the Governance Continuum (below).

Under the Conservation Act 1987, DoC is charged with conserving the natural and historic heritage of New Zealand for present and future New Zealanders. It also has a mandate to foster recreation where that recreation is consistent with conservation values. DoC generally focuses its efforts (and manages land) in areas of national conservation and recreation significance (e.g. National Parks). The lands DoC manages are predominantly distanced from urban areas and tend to offer low-impact recreational opportunities, such as tramping. In the Wellington region, the Department's lands range from "back country drive in" to "remote experience"<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> These categories are based on the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum – a tool for classifying land in terms of the recreational opportunities it provides. There are eight categories ranging from most to least accessible and serviced: urban, urban fringe, rural, back country drive in, back country four wheel drive, back country walk in, remote experience, and wilderness. All types exist in the Wellington region except for wilderness.



**Legend**

-  WRC Water Collection Areas
-  WRC Regional Parks
-  WRC Plantation Forest
-  WRC managed lands
-  Dept of Conservation Managed Areas
-  TA parks and reserves
-  Local Govt Boundaries
-  Whitireia Park



# Map 2 Parks and Reserves of the Wellington Region

Copyright: Wellington Regional Council. Hillshading derived from LINZ 20m contours. Rivers and streams are copyright LINZ.

Sources:  
TA parks and reserves derived from the respective TA's  
note: Carterton District Council is not included  
note: SWDC and KCDC data not complete  
WRC managed lands derived from OBiens property database and WREGGIS  
DoC managed areas derived from Department of Conservation

All other data derived from WREGGIS

Map printed 6 August 2002

At the other end of the spectrum, territorial authorities focus on meeting local community and recreation needs by providing smaller parks, sports fields, playgrounds, local reserves and urban beaches. These parks are usually managed under the Reserves Act 1977 and are much less focused on natural and historic heritage conservation than DoC reserves and parks. Some territorial authorities also provide larger, multi-purpose parks, and while these can contain large natural areas, they are usually smaller than regional parks. In the Wellington region, city and district council reserves generally fall in the “urban” and “urban fringe” range.

Regional parks lie somewhere in between in both scale and focus. They provide a mix of conservation and recreational opportunities, focusing on protecting values of regional significance. In recreational terms, regional parks span the range from “urban” to “back country”. They are large open spaces or areas of bush near to urban areas that are visited by people across the region.

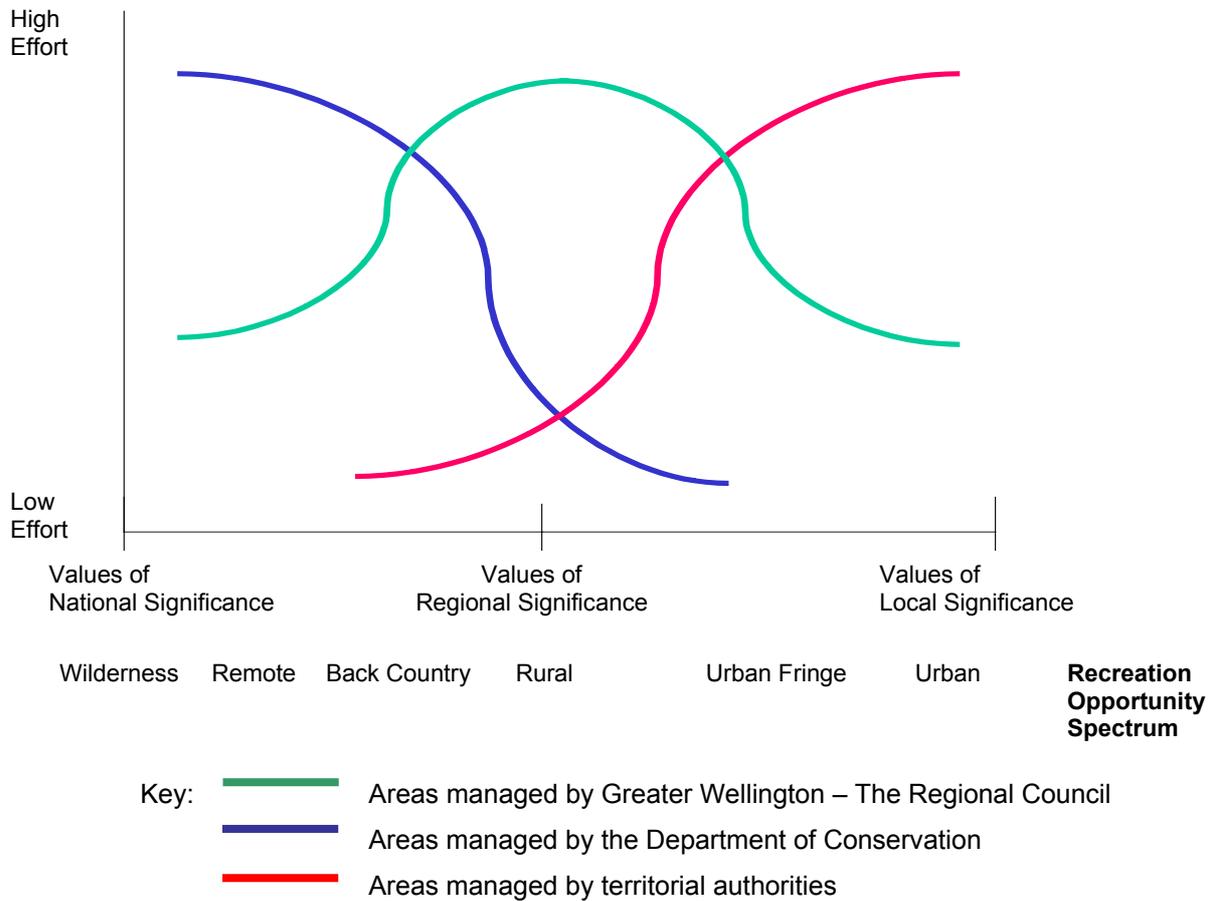
Other areas of land managed by the Regional Council contribute to the protection of environmental and heritage values and the provision of recreational opportunities. The Akatarawa and Pakuratahi Forests, while held for future water supply, are large areas of land that provide extensive recreational opportunities complementing those of other public lands. For example, the Akatarawa Forest is a key area for trail biking and 4WD groups, which are not provided for in regional parks or other Regional Council lands.

River corridors, such as the Hutt River trail, also provide public access to rivers for recreation and key links between recreational areas. River corridors can also be important links between remaining areas of native bush.

Together, these various public lands offer a broad spectrum of recreational opportunities and meet a wide range of community, environmental and conservation needs. The Regional Council, DoC and territorial authorities work together to ensure that environmental and heritage values are protected in the most appropriate ways, and that recreational opportunities across the region enhance and complement one another to address the needs of communities.



## Governance Continuum



### Working Towards the Vision

This network management plan sets out a vision and objectives for the regional parks that express the overall management intentions for the next five years. The plan provides for possibilities within the parks, but is not designed to determine specific results. Rather, it sets broad parameters within which activities will take place, and establishes factors to be considered when assessing activities and making management decisions.

The detailed objectives and policies for each park will be set out in the park-specific management plans, which will be developed within the parameters of this network management plan. In addition, asset management plans determine the levels of service for buildings, structures, tracks and environmental assets in the parks, while the *Annual Plan* establishes how our management plans will be implemented and what will be delivered each year.

This network management plan is not intended to deliver funding to achieve its objectives. Funding is determined through other processes and may not be available to meet all the objectives and policies of this plan at one time. Their achievement will be determined by the availability of resources and the level of community support.

## The Vision in Context – Relationship to Other Plans

This network management plan has been developed in the context of other Regional Council plans, documents and strategies. *Towards a Greater Wellington, the Long Term Council Community Plan* provides the strategic context for the plan, and it is also influenced by other key (and often legally binding) Council documents and policies such as the *Regional Policy Statement, Regional Plans* and associated programmes such as the Council's biodiversity programme.

The chart on the next page indicates the relationship between this network management plan and other relevant Council plans and documents.

## Resourcing the Vision

The Council's *Long Term Council Community Plan* and *Annual Plan* allocate the resources that determine the achievement of the vision in this plan. All local authorities are required to have an *Annual Plan* that outlines the nature and scope of their activities over the financial year and the funds required to carry them out. It is the *Annual Plan* that determines the rating level for the region.

As this network management plan and the park-specific management plans will contain objectives and policies for managing regional parks, they may influence the contents of the Regional Council's *Annual Plan* and budget. In preparing this and future plans, the Council has to have regard to the potential costs for ratepayers. The network and park-specific management plans will set out the vision for regional parks – however, the objectives will not necessarily be achieved immediately; the pace will always be determined by resource limits. What is important is that we have a vision of where we want to be and that we strive to attain it.

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

The Regional Council is committed to looking at ways to minimise the rates burden on ratepayers for providing its services. While rates provide the bulk of funding for regional parks, around one-tenth of our funding comes from other sources such as commercial activities, concessions and fees for use of facilities<sup>3</sup>. The Council has developed a Policy for Recreation and Tourism<sup>4</sup> which establishes criteria and a fees structure for managing activities in regional parks that require levels of service or use beyond those provided to the general public.

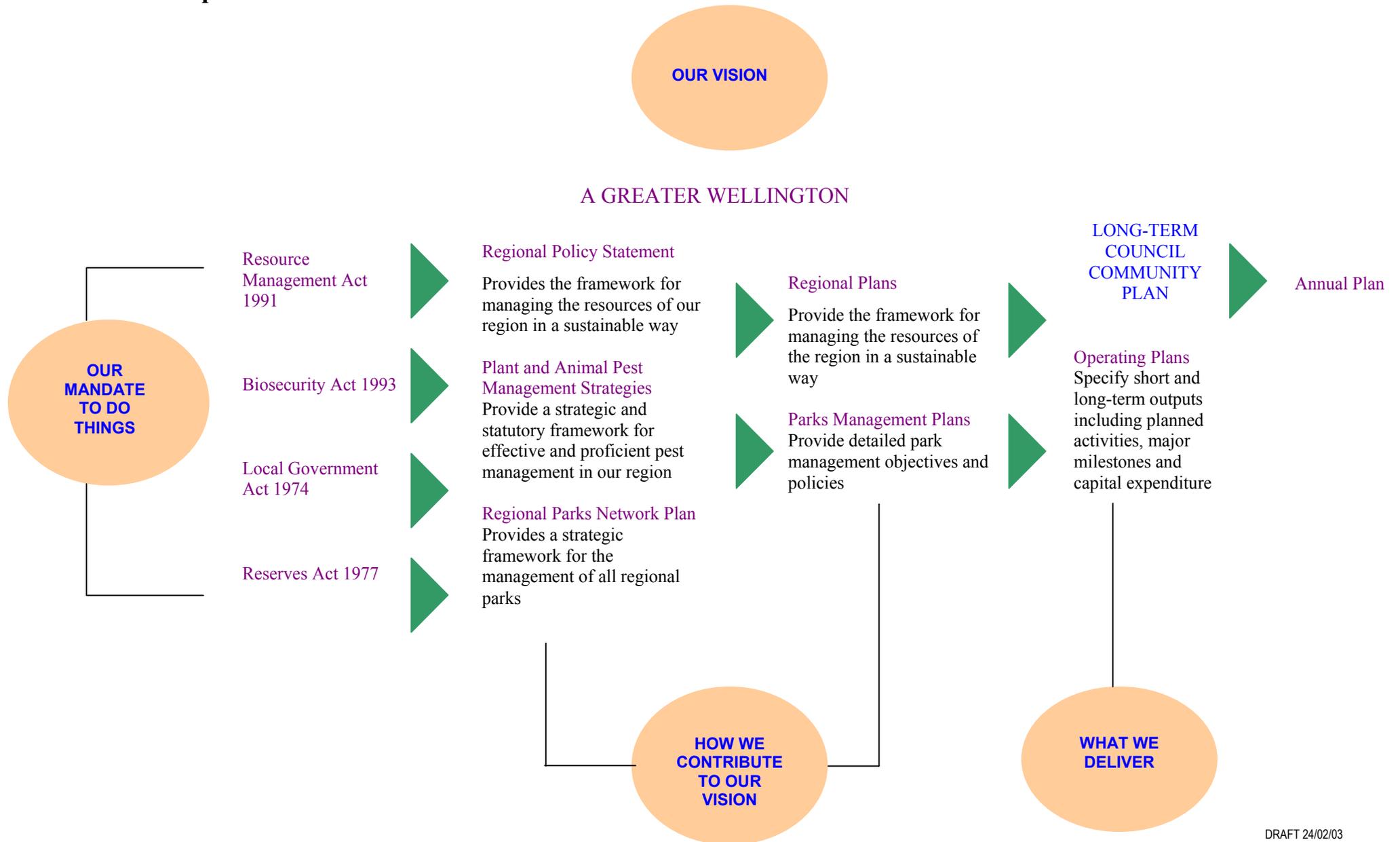
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<sup>3</sup> Current Council policy is that parks and forests are required to fund 10% of the costs of managing regional parks, recreation areas and trails through user charges for organised events, leases, licence fees and added-value services. See *Towards a Greater Wellington – Investing in the Future, Wellington Regional Council ten year plan 2000-2010: 2002 Update Incorporating the 2002-2003 Annual Plan*.

<sup>4</sup> Wellington Regional Council (2001). *Policy for Recreation and Tourism in Wellington Regional Council Parks and Forests*.

# Our Planning Process

## Relationship to Other Council Plans and Documents



## People Participation

Effective park management relies ultimately on the skills and commitment of the people involved and the support they are given to perform their tasks. People are essential to the achievement of our vision, and while park rangers have played and continue to play a vital role in park care and maintenance, the wider community is also very important.

Without strong support from the community, it will be more difficult to maintain and enhance the parks. The Council will continue to value and support the significant and varied contributions that the wider community makes to regional parks and their management. Specific objectives and policies are outlined in this plan to provide for and support participation by the community and by Tangata Whenua.

## Planning for Success

The complexity of the park network means that decision-making occurs at many levels. Planning and policy are important mechanisms for gathering information, identifying and integrating management decisions, and transparently documenting a course of action. They also ensure that similar issues are managed consistently across the network. Planning and policy provide opportunities for community and Tangata Whenua involvement in decision-making, and the input of key government agencies.

For convenience, the plan is divided into sections addressing key areas of policy (such as environment and use of the parks). However, it is important to note that none of these sections can be considered in isolation. The plan needs to be read and interpreted as a whole. For example, while the section on use of the parks provides objectives and policies for community, recreational and commercial opportunities and use, its objectives and policies need to be balanced against the other objectives and policies for protecting environmental and heritage values, and providing for community and Tangata Whenua participation.

Where planning and decision-making require choices between conflicting values, a process and criteria for deciding the way forward are also needed. Part B of this plan – Sustaining Community, Recreational and Commercial Opportunities and Use – outlines a range of factors for decision-makers to take into account when assessing the effects of activities and use that need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Decision-makers are required to consider both the positive and negative effects of a proposed activity over time and undertake appropriate consultation with Tangata Whenua, the community and affected parties.

In line with the Council's *Policy for Recreation and Tourism*, decision-making will be delegated to the appropriate level within the Council. This policy establishes a decision-making process for assessing applications for concessions (i.e. the right to undertake an activity in a park). In brief, the Policy provides for major, minor and temporary concessions as follows:

## **Major concessions**

Major concessions apply to high-impact activities that involve, for example, the building of structures, regular use or occupation of land, or activities that have impacts of regional significance. Examples of major concessions include golf courses and some major sporting events.

They require approval by Greater Wellington - The Regional Council or one of its committees. Where an activity is not provided for in a park-specific management plan, the public will be notified. Where an activity is already provided for in such a plan, public notification will be at the Council's discretion. A major concession may also require a resource consent. This is a separate procedure and not part of the concession application.

Major concessions are likely to have a term of between 5 and 20 years.

## **Minor concessions**

Minor concessions are required for low-impact, small-scale or occasional operations such as some guiding services or tours. They require authorisation by a delegated officer of the Council, and are likely to be authorised as a licence or a permit with a term of up to five years.

## **Temporary concessions**

Temporary concessions apply to low-impact, single events within a six-month period, such as filming. They require authorisation by a delegated officer of the Council and are likely to be authorised as a permit.

## **Consultation to Date**

Over the past year the Council has gathered a significant amount of information on community, stakeholder and Tangata Whenua views on the management of the regional parks and forests. This information has been collected as part of the review of the regional parks and forests management plans and visitor monitoring programme. Feedback was gathered through:

- A telephone survey of 700 people in the Wellington region and two focus groups with people who don't visit the parks.
- Submissions on the review of the regional parks and forests management plans (449 in total, including 309 pro forma submissions advocating a motor sport facility at Queen Elizabeth Park and 59 supporting the ongoing maintenance of the Akatarawa Forest as an area for motorised recreation).
- Reference groups with key users/interest groups (focusing on recreation, environment, heritage and commercial activities/values).
- A visitor satisfaction survey (biennial) carried out in February/March 2002 at Battle Hill, Belmont, Kaitoke, Queen Elizabeth, Pakuratahi and two new areas not included in previous surveys: Wainuiomata Recreation Area and Akatarawa Forest. This was a self-administering survey and involved completion of a short questionnaire. A total of 835 responses was received.

In addition, Iwi groups were consulted individually through the Council's Ara Tahī Committee and at an Iwi Technical Workshop.

Together, this information provides a picture of community views, including those of both users and non-users of the parks and forests, which has been useful in drafting this and other plans.

Key points from the community feedback to date are:

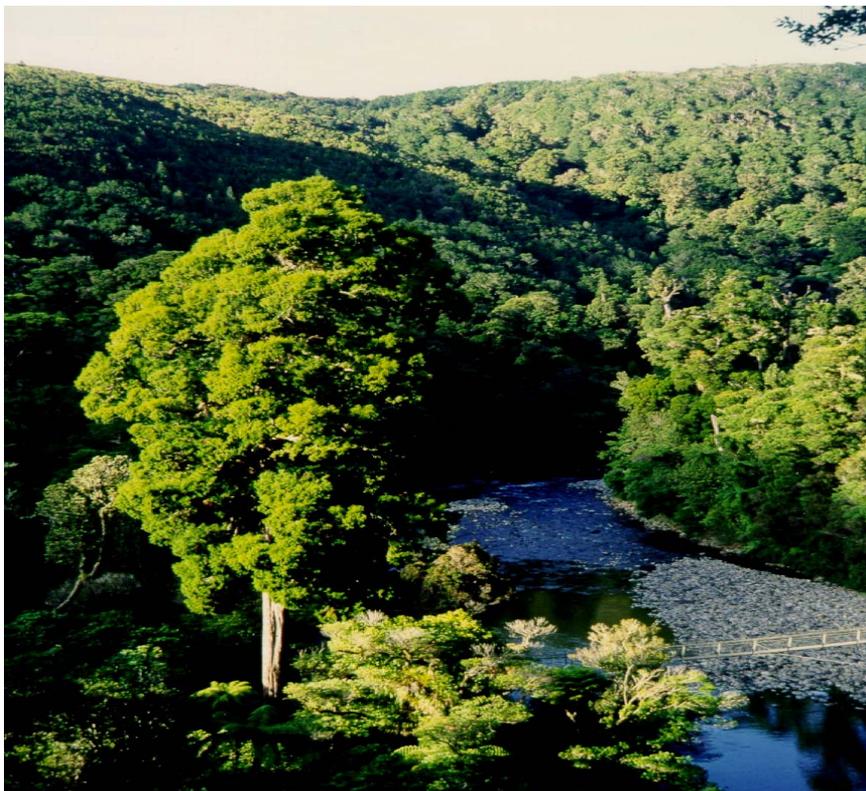
- Three-quarters of regional residents have visited one or more regional parks and forests in the past year.
- People choose parks for their natural setting, good views and quiet or isolation.
- People appreciate the diversity of environments and experiences available in regional parks.
- The main activities undertaken in the parks are walking or running (including walking the dog), tramping, swimming, cycling and picnicking.
- Maintaining the natural setting and continuing environmental protection are of great importance to the community.
- The protection of heritage sites was also important to many people.
- Common suggestions for improvement relate to:
  - Greater environmental work including pest control and ecological restoration.
  - New/Improved facilities, particularly toilets, rubbish bins, seating and tracks.
  - Greater protection and promotion of heritage values.
  - Better management of conflict between users.
  - Greater promotion of the parks, but carefully managed to prevent over-use.
- Views are divided on whether the Council should allow for greater commercial use of the parks and forests.
- There is support for continued/greater community involvement in the regional parks and forests.
- There is strong support for ongoing protection of regional parks, forests and recreation areas.

The key theme arising from consultation with Tangata Whenua is their interest in being involved in the care and protection of the environmental and heritage values of the parks. Tangata Whenua have expressed a desire to practise the customary guardianship and care of the environment and natural resources, including the sustainable use of resources such as plants for weaving or medicinal purposes. Tangata Whenua are also interested in being more involved in the management of their cultural heritage within the parks, and providing information to the wider community about the Tangata Whenua history and heritage of the parks. Tangata Whenua interests are addressed in greater detail in Part C of this plan.

## Section 2: The Plan for Greater Wellington Parks



## Part A – Conserving our Environment and Cultural Heritage



## Sustaining our Environment

### Parks in Context – Our Regional Environment

The Wellington region has a diverse environment – from built-up cities to pasture lands and forest-clad mountain ranges, crossed by rivers and surrounded by sea. While the entire region has been modified to some extent, the environment ranges from being highly modified to having areas that have retained their natural, indigenous character.

As we have changed our environment, we have also affected the ecosystems<sup>5</sup> within it. As a result of our activities there has been a drastic reduction in the biological diversity of native species and ecosystems – or biodiversity<sup>6</sup> – in the region and the nation. In the Wellington region, as throughout New Zealand, we have had the most impact on lowland areas. While steep, mountainous areas were sometimes cleared, it was generally the flat lowlands that were modified. Through the clearance of indigenous forests, the draining of wetlands and the development of coastal areas, some ecosystems in the region – and the species living in them – are now very rare.

Much of what does remain has been seriously damaged by plant and animal pests, and continues to be at risk. The challenge now is to halt the decline in our native biodiversity so that no more of our precious and unique native species are lost forever, and to minimise the adverse impacts of our activities on the environment.

### The Regional Council's Response

The Council recognises the need to halt the continued loss of remnant areas, species and ecosystems. It has expanded its biodiversity programme to address the key ecosystem types that are recognised in the *Regional Policy Statement* as being depleted or under threat in the region:

- Wetlands.
- Rivers and streams.
- Estuaries.
- Dunes.
- Lowland bush.
- Coastal escarpments.
- Marine ecosystems.



Each of these ecosystem types is addressed by the Council in different ways – through plans, strategies, and a variety of programmes and projects.

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<sup>5</sup> An ecosystem is a community of different species – plants, animals (including humans) and micro-organisms – interacting with one another and their surrounding environment. An indigenous ecosystem is one where significant elements are native to New Zealand.

<sup>6</sup> The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity defines biodiversity as the variability among living organisms from all sources including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part. This includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.

## Environmental Values of the Regional Parks

About 50% of the land within Wellington's regional parks is managed as natural ecosystems. Much of this contains ecosystems that are recognised in the *Regional Policy Statement* as being depleted or under threat.

Kaitoke Regional Park contains large areas of indigenous forest that include unmodified podocarp/broadleaf forest. A nationally rare mistletoe and a diversity of birdlife are found in the area. The Hutt and Pakuratahi Rivers and a number of small streams run through the Park and provide important habitats for native fish species and aquatic vegetation.

The Northern Block of East Harbour Regional Park includes a large area of regenerating indigenous forest, with regionally significant species in gullies and hilltops, and a wide range of bird species. The Lakes Block surrounds Lakes Kohangatera and Kohangapiripiri (managed by DoC), which are nationally significant wetlands and breeding areas for rare native birds. These lakes, Butterfly Creek and Gollans Stream contain native fish species such as the rare giant kokopu, while the area is home to rare coastal and swamp plants such as *Desmoschoenus spiralis*, *Pimelia urvilleana*, *Crassula kirkii* and *Glossostigma diandrum*.

Queen Elizabeth Park contains the last relatively unmodified coastal dune systems on the Kapiti Coast. It is also home to small patches of coastal forest of mahoe, kanuka, kaikomako and ngaio. There is a remnant stand of native bush containing kahikatea forest, whilst adjoining wetlands have rare native plants. A number of native bird species are also found in the Park, and the rare native fish – giant kokopu – is present in one of the streams.

Belmont Regional Park contains indigenous forest remnants in Korokoro Valley surrounded by regenerating indigenous forest. Other smaller remnants of indigenous forest exist throughout the Park. A variety of native birds, lizards and freshwater native fish have also been recorded in the Park.

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park is home to an area of kohekohe forest and the regionally rare plant *Rabdothamnus solandri*. Nationally threatened native fish have also been found in the Horokiri Stream catchment.

Plant and animal pests are a major threat to the preservation of indigenous ecosystems within the regional parks. Possums, deer, rodents and mustelids (such as ferrets) continue to weaken natural ecosystems and cause a loss of biodiversity. Pest animals impact by browsing on native plants – leaves, flowers and fruit – competing with native fauna for food, and in some cases preying on native fauna. Plant pests such as Old Man's Beard have the potential to smother large areas of native forest. Other plant pests can interfere with the regeneration of indigenous ecosystems by competing for light and space, such as Spanish Heath and Boneseed. Insect or fungal invasions can also pose a threat.

Natural hazards such as fire and erosion may also impact on environmental values by damaging or destroying natural communities of plants and animals.

Visitor activities, management actions or park developments can pose a threat to ecosystems by disturbing the habitat or species, impacting on soil or water quality.

## Sustainable Management of the Parks

The Resource Management Act 1991 and the *Regional Policy Statement* and *Regional Plans* aim to promote the sustainable management of natural resources. The *Regional Policy Statement* recognises the diversity of environmental types within the region, including areas of indigenous vegetation, pasture and city streets. While these may need to be administered in different ways, all need to be managed in a way that sustains our environment for current and future generations.

Just like the region as a whole, regional parks contain a mix of environments that contribute to their character and diversity. Those diverse environments will need to be managed in different ways. For example, the open pastures in Belmont and Battle Hill will be managed differently from areas of indigenous forest in Kaitoke Regional Park. Nevertheless, the management of all regional park land should contribute to the sustainability of our region. We aim to manage the regional parks through an approach that:

- Recognises the complexity and interconnectedness of the environment.
- Recognises the character and dynamics of particular ecosystems.
- Seeks to manage the whole of the ecosystem rather than just some of its parts.
- Seeks to protect the life-supporting capacity of ecosystems.

### Areas of High Ecological Value

Ecosystems of high value:

- a) Are representative of the region's indigenous biodiversity.
- b) Are regionally or nationally rare or vulnerable.
- c) Have special features such as regionally or nationally rare or vulnerable or unique species, populations of species known or likely to be valuable as a genetic resource, an unusually high diversity of indigenous species, unique or unusual geological features, or special cultural or spiritual values.
- d) Are, or have the potential to be, significant areas of indigenous vegetation or significant habitats of indigenous fauna<sup>7</sup>.

Areas of high ecological value will be managed primarily to protect and enhance these values, sustain their life-supporting capacity and contribute to the region's indigenous biodiversity. We will seek to protect what remains of indigenous ecosystems and communities and, where appropriate, restore them to a sustainable and natural condition. Protection means attempting to prevent any further damage to the existing ecological values, while restoration is about enhancing or improving ecological values.

There are many choices to be made about what an area's "natural state" is, and what it should be "restored" to. In some areas, protection from alien pests may be enough to restore an area to a more natural state. In others, a more intensive programme of ecological restoration or active species' management may be required. The level of intervention required will depend upon the priority of the ecosystem and its ability to restore itself.

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<sup>7</sup> These criteria are based on those from the *Regional Policy Statement* (Ecosystems policies).

## **Modified Areas**

Parks include a range of modified environments such as pastoral farms, exotic tree plantations, visitor service areas and grassed picnic areas. These areas are important to the parks' character and provide many significant recreational opportunities. Consequently, these areas will be managed primarily for their sustainable use, and the policies that will often be most relevant to them are found in Part B of this plan – Sustaining Community, Recreational and Commercial Opportunities and Use.

Modified areas such as farms can also include small remnants of native bush or streams and rivers that will be managed for their ecological values. Where appropriate, they may be restored to a more indigenous state and/or used to develop ecological corridors between areas of high ecological values.

## **Monitoring Results**

We need information to ensure that we are managing the high-value park ecosystems in the best possible way and using our resources wisely. We generally monitor indigenous ecosystems to assess the effects of management on overall ecosystem health. For example, we may monitor the coastal dunes at Queen Elizabeth Park to look at how different management approaches affect the dune ecosystems. We may also monitor particular plants and animals that are threatened to assess their status and whether management techniques are aiding their survival.

In order to assess the effectiveness of our pest control measures we may monitor the levels of weeds and pests in the parks and the change in health of the ecosystem we are trying to protect. For example we may monitor small plots of bush to look at the growth of seedlings before and after a pest control operation.

Sometimes we may carry out surveys to find out exactly what we have in the parks so that we can manage them well. Fish surveys have found a number of indigenous fish species living in rivers and streams within the parks that were previously not known to exist there. This information has resulted in us changing our management of some river and stream areas to protect the habitat of those species.

Information from these activities is important in assisting us to manage the environmental values of the parks in the most effective and efficient way and ensure that our activities are contributing towards the desired results. Together with the information gathered by DoC, other researchers, Tangata Whenua and the community, this helps us to see how our environment is changing over time, and how effective our management is.

## **Objectives**

- A. Ecosystems of high ecological value in the regional parks are actively protected and appropriately managed.
- B. The area and quality of indigenous ecosystems are increased.
- C. Both indigenous and modified ecosystems within the parks are healthy, their life-supporting capacity is sustained, and they contribute to good-quality water, air and soil.

- D. Regional parks provide examples of best environmental practice and advocate such practice to the public.

## **Policies**

### *Environmental Best Practice*

1. To advocate and demonstrate best environmental practice through regional parks.

### *Information, Research and Monitoring*

2. To increase understanding of ecosystems of high ecological value within the parks through research and information-gathering.
3. To encourage a greater awareness within the community of the range and significance of ecosystems in the parks.
4. To acknowledge and incorporate Maori ecological knowledge and values in the management of regional parks.

### *Ecosystem Protection and Enhancement*

5. To protect and enhance indigenous ecosystems within the regional parks.
6. To prioritise ecosystems within the parks for protection and enhancement that<sup>8</sup>:
  - ⇒ Are currently or are likely to be under a high degree of threat.
  - ⇒ Are representative of the region's indigenous biodiversity.
  - ⇒ Are regionally or nationally rare or vulnerable.
  - ⇒ Have special features such as regionally or nationally rare or vulnerable or unique species, populations of species known or likely to be valuable as a genetic resource, an unusually high diversity of indigenous species, unique or unusual geological features, or special cultural or spiritual values.
  - ⇒ Are, or have the potential to be, significant areas of indigenous vegetation or significant habitats of indigenous fauna.

Protection and enhancement may include:

- ⇒ Plant and animal pest control.
- ⇒ Fencing.
- ⇒ Removal of stock.
- ⇒ Riparian management.
- ⇒ Re-introducing plant and/or animal species.
- ⇒ Restoring physical features (such as waterways).

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<sup>8</sup> These criteria are based on those from the *Regional Policy Statement* (Ecosystems policies).

- ⇒ Control of recreational and commercial use.
  - ⇒ Fire control.
8. To base the nature and level of protection or enhancement upon the values of the ecosystem and its ability to restore itself, and the other key values of the area (such as recreational values).
  9. To allow for natural regeneration of modified or degraded native ecosystems where they are likely to regenerate without active intervention, e.g. where there is a local seed source and the ecosystem has the capacity to restore itself.
  10. When restoring areas, to use plants sourced from the local ecological district wherever possible.
  11. When assessing and implementing restoration projects, to also consider:
    - ⇒ Opportunities for planting species that may be used for social and cultural purposes such as for medicinal uses and weaving, and plants of significance to Tangata Whenua.
    - ⇒ The contribution the area could make to ecological corridors within the region.
    - ⇒ The level of public support and involvement.
  12. As far as practicable, to maintain the native ecosystems of waterways and minimise threats to the water quality and quantity in rivers, lakes and wetlands in regional parks.

*Pest Plants and Animals*

13. To actively control pest plants and animals in regional parks to allow for the recovery of indigenous ecosystems and sustain their life-supporting capacity.
14. To base animal and plant pest control on the:
  - ⇒ Vulnerability and ecological value of the ecosystem under threat.
  - ⇒ Nature and extent of the threat posed.
  - ⇒ Distribution and size of the pest population.
  - ⇒ Requirements of the Regional Pest Management Strategy.
15. To take all practicable steps to prevent new plant and animal pest infestations and to survey regularly for new infestations.
16. To control pest plants and animals using the most efficient and effective techniques available. Assessments of effectiveness will take into account the adverse effects on non-target species, the environment and human health.

17. To monitor the:
  - ⇒ Locations, nature and extent of pest plant and animal infestations in regional parks.
  - ⇒ 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.
18. To ensure plant pest management also takes into account the need for a restoration plan for the area, to prevent re-infestation of weed species.

#### *Introduced Plants*

19. To only plant introduced plants<sup>9</sup> where:
  - ⇒ They have a specific purpose or amenity value in accordance with the management objectives of the area;and
  - ⇒ The area has low indigenous ecological values; and.
  - ⇒ They pose a known low threat to indigenous ecosystems.
20. To enable existing introduced plants to be removed for ecological purposes, except where they:
  - ⇒ Are of historical or cultural significance; or
  - ⇒ Are acting as a “nurse crop” for native species; or
  - ⇒ Have a high amenity value; or
  - ⇒ Are necessary for farming or forestry activities; or
  - ⇒ Provide another important facility such as erosion control or protection of heritage features.

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<sup>9</sup> Introduced 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.

## **Preserving Landscapes**

### **Regional Landscapes**

The landscapes of the Wellington region provide a backdrop to our communities, be they the high rises, houses and hills around Wellington harbour, the green forested mountains of the Rimutaka Ranges, or the river flats of the Hutt Valley or Wairarapa.

### **What is Landscape?**

The landscape is essentially a combination of landform, land cover and land use. Landform is the soil and rocks shaped by geological and natural processes over time. It is the shape of the land, and includes rivers, lakes and wetlands. The land could be covered by asphalt and buildings, or lush natural forests. Human activities may leave a mark on the land – from the small and temporary to the large and long lasting.

Landscape is also about values, stories and people. Particular landscapes can conjure up intense feelings. Landscape has aesthetic, cultural and personal values. For Tangata Whenua, the land and the landscape represent many things including ancestors and their activities, history and genealogy.

Landscape, environment and heritage are all closely intertwined. Landscape is the combination of the natural environment and human interaction with it.

### **Landscape Values of the Regional Parks**

Regional parks contain some diverse and important landscapes. For example, the open, golden hills of East Harbour and Belmont Regional Parks are significant features of the Wellington harbour landscape. These areas are enjoyed by many people who may never set foot in them. The raised beaches at Lakes Kohangatera and Kohangapiripiri in East Harbour Regional Park are nationally significant landforms. The forested valleys and hills criss-crossed by streams and rivers in Kaitoke Regional Park contribute to the landscape values of the Hutt Valley. The open coastal dunes of Queen Elizabeth Park and the colonial homestead and farm at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park also protect disappearing landscapes and settings in our region.

### **Effects on Landscape Values**

Future development, subdivision, land clearance, roading and a number of other activities could potentially impact on our important regional landscapes and Tangata Whenua values in the land. The loss of natural character in the region, such as indigenous forest remnants, can also impact on our landscape.

This makes the landscapes in the regional parks even more important. This plan aims to maintain the essential character of each of the regional parks and preserve their landscape values.

## Objectives

- A. The regional parks network will contribute to a diverse range of landscapes and settings.
- B. Specific landscapes of particular significance to Tangata Whenua within regional parks will be protected where possible.

## Policies

- 1. To assess development and management proposals for their likely effects on landscape values with a view to:
  - ⇒ Maintaining a diverse range of distinctive landscapes and settings, including dominant landscape features of particular significance.
  - ⇒ Acknowledging and protecting areas of particular significance to Tangata Whenua
  - ⇒ Maintaining significant modified landscapes, such as pastoral farming settings.
  - ⇒ Managing the scale of development so it is appropriate to the setting in which it is located.
- 2. To identify key development nodes in each park where facilities and structures will be maintained and developed.

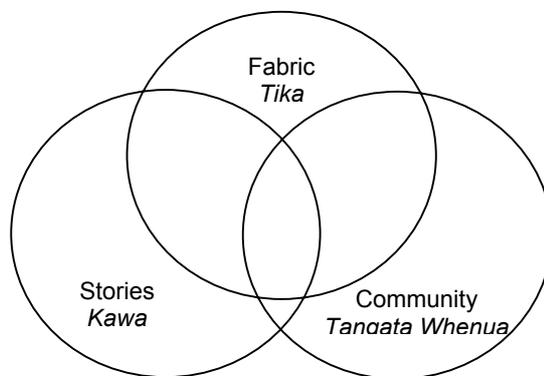


## Protecting Cultural Heritage

### What is Cultural Heritage?

Cultural heritage provides a living record of history which includes landscapes, important moments in the development of communities, peoples, tribes and the nation, the joys and sorrows of individuals, and the stories of our connection with places. Cultural heritage conservation in parks is sometimes regarded as the protection of historic places and objects of obvious heritage significance such as historic buildings or dams. But is much more than that! It is a dynamic process based on keeping alive associations with place, as well as protecting specific sites and structures.

DoC has developed a useful model that describes heritage in both Maori and European terms as an intersection of three key components.



Tangata Whenua concepts of heritage are based on the directions of tikanga (custom and culture) and include:

- Kawa – traditional expressions.
- Tika – customary practices.
- Tangata Whenua – community and culture.

The European model includes:

- Stories – memories, archives, images etc.
- Fabric – the physical material of the heritage – land, structures, places, artefacts.
- Community – includes the community's perceptions, experience and skills.

### The Diversity of Heritage

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

Archaeological sites are places associated with human activity that occurred before 1900, where there may be evidence relating to the history of New Zealand. Archaeological sites in New Zealand include Maori pa sites, remains of cultivation areas and gardens, middens, rock art sites, shipwrecks and other historic sites containing evidence of whaling, trading, gold mining or other activities. In many instances physical evidence may not show on the surface. Architectural or built heritage includes buildings such as marae, houses, bridges and dams.

Any or all of these cultural heritage types may also be considered to be wahi tapu (sacred places) or wahi taonga (treasures) of the Iwi, Hapu or Whanau concerned, based on the dictates of tikanga.

### Legal Protection of Heritage

Both archaeological and architectural heritage are protected by the Historic Places Act 1993.

Tangata Whenua cultural heritage is protected as a “matter of national importance” under section 6(e) of the Resource Management Act 1991. Wahi tapu are also protected through the Historic Places Act 1993, and the Te Ture Whenua Maori Act 1993 if they are designated as Maori reserves.

### Heritage Values in the Parks

The regional parks contain many heritage features.

Parts of East Harbour Regional Park have significant heritage values. There are many signs of Maori occupation evident in the Park. Around the lakes at Pencarrow are stone walls, midden sites, dendroglyphs and cultivation sites. The Park also contains an important route used by Maori and early European settlers from Lowry Bay to Wainuiomata. There are several shipwrecks on the edges of the Park and, possibly as a result of this, the first lighthouse in New Zealand was built at Pencarrow in 1859.

Queen Elizabeth Park is also rich in heritage. The area has been used extensively by Maori up to the present. There are many remains of Maori occupation from previous times including pa sites, midden sites, cultivation sites and urupa. The area was home to both Maori and pioneer coach routes along the coast. United States Marines had a camp site in the park during World War II. The Park also contains a tramway museum.

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park is so named because it is the site of the last battle between Maori and the Crown in the region in 1846. The Park contains a colonial homestead, cottage, woolshed, stockyards and gravestones. The area may also have been a Maori route along the ridge from Abbots Trig.

Areas of Belmont Regional Park were important routes for Maori and later European settlers. In years gone by, the area was used for water collection and the Korokoro dam and weir built in 1903 still remain. There were also flour and woollen mills in the 1800s. The hills in Belmont were used extensively during World War II for defence purposes, and many ammunition magazines remain there.

The history of logging in the area of Kaitoke Regional Park is evident through the old logging tramlines and sawmill sites. The area has been used for water supply for some time and the Kaitoke weir, flume bridge and aqueduct tunnel attest to this. The remains of an old homestead are evident at Te Marua in Kaitoke Regional Park.

## Challenges for Managing Heritage Values in Parks

### **Identification and Information**

One of the key challenges in protecting heritage values is to identify those that exist. Assessing and recording heritage are crucial first steps. Alongside that, gathering information, knowledge, stories and memories brings life, context and history to the site or item. Where we can't maintain features, such as where they are being destroyed through coastal erosion, we can at least gather information about them.

The information that exists or is collected needs to be used appropriately – which means being provided to the public in some cases, and restricted in other cases where it is private or sensitive. This includes ensuring any information relating to Tangata Whenua cultural values is managed according to protocols and processes established by Tangata Whenua.

### **Protection**

Protecting the fabric of heritage from physical damage – through decay, disaster or human activities – is the next important step. For example, improving access, increasing visitor numbers or providing information to the public about the existence of heritage sites could lead to increasing use of and pressure on areas, or potentially increasing vandalism. Some forms of recreation can damage heritage features through physical impact on the environment.

Environmental restoration projects can also have an impact so we need to ensure that heritage sites are not being damaged and features that should be accessible do not become obscured, e.g. through planting over the top of heritage features. Natural hazards pose a risk. Coastal erosion is occurring in Queen Elizabeth Park and as a result many archaeological sites are being exposed. Animals (pests and stock) can also cause damage to heritage features through browsing and land disturbance and need to be managed in areas where they pose a threat. Pest plants can either cause damage to heritage sites or in some cases protect them from erosion.

Currently, we have conservation plans for our built heritage and structures, but not for archaeological sites or heritage areas. We need to develop policies and plans for how best to protect these other areas.

The framework for conservation of heritage buildings is the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value. Conservation processes in the Charter are: “Non-intervention; maintenance; stabilisation; repair; restoration; reconstruction; adaptation; and interpretation.” The selection of appropriate conservation levels is based on: “Retention of authenticity; retention of heritage values; minimum and reversible interventions; and complete documentation.” Our policies and practices are based on this Charter.

### **Community Involvement**

Relationships with, and celebrations of, heritage occur in communities of people. Consequently, one of the most important aspects of protecting cultural heritage is the involvement of the community. Cultural heritage is an important educational resource for us to learn about our history.

## **Tangata Whenua Kaitiaki**

The Council will work with Tangata Whenua to ensure that areas and values of significance are appropriately protected. Cultural heritage management involves Tangata Whenua as kaitiaki or guardians of their own cultural heritage, according to tikanga.

### **The Challenge**

The challenge is to care for and present the historic and cultural heritage values of the parks in a manner that recognises and respects the links, both past and present, between the land and its people.

## **Objectives**

- A. Significant heritage values and features in the parks are identified and protected and interpreted, presented and promoted to the community.
- B. Knowledge, history and stories relating to heritage values in the parks are preserved.
- C. Tangata Whenua are appropriately involved in the management of their cultural heritage.
- D. The community has an understanding and appreciation of the significant heritage values of the parks and is involved in heritage management, and the parks contribute to the community's sense of place in the region.

## **Policies**

### *Information Gathering*

1. To identify, protect and preserve information and knowledge related to significant heritage sites and values of the parks:
  - ⇒ According to national standards and Tangata Whenua tikanga.
  - ⇒ Having appropriate regard to relevant privacy issues and cultural requirements.

### *Management and Protection*

2. To manage historic and cultural heritage features based on their significance and the level of threat to them.
3. To ensure assessments of the “significance” of features take into account:
  - ⇒ Age, rarity and representativeness.
  - ⇒ The nature and level of information available about the features.
  - ⇒ The cultural, educational and scientific value of the features.
  - ⇒ Whether the features are collective, i.e. encompassing a number of heritage features.

4. To work towards the development of conservation plans for significant heritage features as appropriate.
5. To restore or enhance degraded heritage areas or features where possible and appropriate.
6. To adhere to nationally established procedures where historic and cultural heritage features are unearthed (e.g. those established by the Historic Places Trust).

#### *Interpretation*

7. To present and interpret significant heritage values to the community, except where they may be:
  - ⇒ At risk from damage or vandalism through increased knowledge or access.
  - ⇒ Particularly sensitive areas such as grave sites or wahi tapu, for which greater information and public access could degrade the areas physically or spiritually.

#### *Working with Tangata Whenua in the Management of Historic and Cultural Heritage*

8. To manage sites of significance to Tangata Whenua in a manner determined through consultation, taking into account nationally and locally established protocols, e.g. relating to the management of cultural artefacts or human remains.

#### *Involving the Community*

9. To work with relevant community groups and historical societies to identify, assess and interpret historical and heritage sites.
10. To encourage a greater awareness of the range and significance of the cultural heritage values and features of the regional parks within the community.



## Part B – Sustaining Community, Recreational and Commercial Opportunities and Use



## **Providing Opportunities**

Parks are for people. While we must protect the important environmental and cultural heritage values of parks, they exist to be used and enjoyed by the community. Regional parks are important recreational and community resources providing diverse, accessible, open spaces and recreational opportunities near to the urban centres. Regional parks provide for a wide range of uses including recreational, community, educational, commercial, and Tangata Whenua customary uses.

## **Recreation and Relaxation**

Parks are popular places to visit to take small or long walks, or engage in more adventurous activities such as mountain biking. Each park has its own characteristics and provides different opportunities for visitors, with diverse settings from open hilltops to dense forests and coastal dunes. The aim in regional parks is to balance the need to provide for facilities and recreational activities with the protection of the environment, heritage values and open, unspoilt, landscapes.

## **Community Activities**

Parks can be a space for community activities and events such as sports, clubs or social events. Parks host community fundraising events, group picnics and walking groups. People can also get involved in the parks through planting trees with a local care group or being part of a vintage machinery club that restores and cares for heritage items in the parks.

## **Education and Research**

The parks are used extensively for education. Many school children visit the parks to learn about the environment or participate in planting days. Many individuals and educational institutions also carry out research into the ecological or heritage values of the parks.

## **Customary Maori Activities**

The continued practice of customary activities sustains the culture, values and traditional knowledge of Tangata Whenua. Customary practices of guardianship, stewardship and customary use of natural resources are part of the relationship that Tangata Whenua have with the land. The Regional Council has a role to play by working with Tangata Whenua to identify practical opportunities for the expression of customary practices and the sustainable management and use of the parks.

## **Hunting and Gathering**

The parks provide opportunities for hunting, fishing and collecting natural materials for food or arts and crafts. These activities are important to many people for social, recreational and cultural purposes and can be provided for within a framework of sustainable management. The Council also receives requests from people wishing to collect seeds to grow native plants. This is generally on a non-commercial basis, although we sometimes receive requests from commercial growers.

## Land Management

Farming or grazing of park lands is sometimes used as a management tool to maintain open spaces and control weeds. It can also provide an income stream to contribute to the management of the parks.

## Tourism

Regional parks form part of a wider network of recreation and tourism opportunities within the region. They provide opportunities to highlight the region's environment, history and cultural heritage within the tourism market. Visitors can experience these values first hand by undertaking a range of activities within the parks according to their interests and abilities. Regional parks also host community, sporting and cultural events that can draw people from around the country and overseas, thereby contributing to tourism within the region.

## Commercial

Parks also provide for commercial activities as appropriate. A number of commercial operators provide a range of services within the parks – including outdoor recreation and guided tours. The parks are also becoming increasingly popular sites for filming. These commercial activities not only provide direct returns to the Council to help run the parks, they also contribute to the broader regional economy. Sustainable energy production may be considered in this context.

## Current Uses of Regional Parks

Table 2 indicates some of the key uses of each of the parks:

**Table 2: Key Uses of Wellington's Regional Parks**

Park	Current Recreational Opportunities	Other Current Uses
<b>Battle Hill Farm Forest Park</b>	Used by picnickers, campers, walkers, cyclists, runners and horse riders. Regionally important for horse riding. Schools use the Ken Gray Education Centre. Battle Hill has approximately 70,000 visits per year.	Farming/Grazing Network utilities St Bernard's College Woodlot
<b>Belmont Regional Park</b>	Used by picnickers, walkers, trampers, cyclists, runners and horse riders. Some camping. Regionally important for mountain biking. Belmont has approximately 100,000 visits per year.	Confidence course Network utilities Farming/Grazing
<b>East Harbour Regional Park</b>	The bush tracks from Wainuiomata Hill to Days Bay and to Butterfly Creek are well used by walkers, trampers and runners. The Pencarrow coastal road is used by walkers, trampers, cyclists and runners to visit the lighthouse. Estimated over 100,000 visits per year.	Network utilities
<b>Kaitoke Regional Park</b>	Used by picnickers, campers, walkers, trampers, swimmers, anglers, rafters and canoeists. Provides access to Hutt Water Collection Area. Some hunting. Regionally important for picnicking. Kaitoke has approximately 100,000 visits per year.	Network utilities
<b>Queen Elizabeth Park</b>	Used by picnickers, campers (motor camp), walkers, horse riders, swimmers, surfers, anglers and sports events. Tram rides at Mackays Crossing. Regionally important for picnicking. Queen Elizabeth Park has approximately 300,000 visits per year.	Model aircraft club Farming/Grazing Guided horse riding Kennel club

## **Managing Use to Protect Values**

### **Future Influences on Use**

Many changes in society could influence the future use of, and demand for, regional parks. We have considered some of the possible future influences on the use of parks, and what effect they might have.

Population changes in the region in the next ten years are expected to be moderate and should not place undue stress on parks beyond what is currently experienced in peak use periods in key park locations, although a more diverse population may lead to changes in the way park visitors are consulted and communicated with.

Changing work patterns mean that greater use of the parks 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 lead to greater:

- Use by walking groups.
- Demands for disabled access.
- Pressure on accessible areas such as Queen Elizabeth Park (and walks in urban/urban fringe 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 parks.

Throughout the community there is an increasing awareness of the environment and concern for environmental quality. Use of the parks for environmental education of the community has increased over recent years, and may continue to do so.

Trends in regional parks and forests include increasing demands for guided walks and interpretation, motorised recreation, and the use of the parks for large events and festivals. Over recent years filming activity has increased and it is now the most significant commercial activity in the regional parks and forests.

Tangata Whenua are likely to play a greater role in park management, particularly as Treaty claims in the Wellington region are settled. Greater Tangata Whenua involvement and acknowledgement of traditional customs, knowledge and interests will also enhance park experiences.

### **Balancing Use and Protection**

As natural places and open space become rarer with increasing urbanisation and development, the challenge for park management is to balance use with the protection of natural and cultural heritage values.

Therefore, when assessing the appropriateness of activities and uses in regional parks, we will:

- Encourage activities and uses that are sustainable or enhance a sustainable region.
- Discourage or prohibit activities and uses that are unsustainable or detract from a sustainable region.

Where environmental or heritage values are high (e.g. in areas of native bush or archaeological sites), 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 (e.g. in modified grasslands, areas of low heritage value), areas will be managed primarily for sustainable use, and social and economic activities will be less constrained.

The use and development of the parks and the resulting effects will be monitored over time. It will be important to assess the impacts of all use and development in social, environmental and recreational terms.

### Removal of Natural Materials

This network management plan provides for limited removal of plants, animals and natural materials where this 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.

### Types of Activities

This network management plan identifies activities and uses that are allowed, managed, restricted or prohibited across all regional parks. Park-specific plans will identify any additional restrictions or specifications required in each park.

*Allowed activities* are acceptable in most parks and will only be restricted where necessary to: protect environmental, cultural or heritage values; protect the health and wellbeing of visitors; facilitate park operations; and provide for the enjoyment of other users. These activities do not require the use of services or facilities other than those provided to all park users.

Permits or permission are required for *managed activities*. They generally need to be carried out in a specific location, which may involve the exclusive use or occupation of an area or resource and/or could adversely affect natural and cultural resources or other park users.

*Restricted activities* are those that are not “allowed”, “managed” or “prohibited”. Applications need to be made to the Council, and will be considered in accordance with the factors outlined under the policy for “Assessing Effects of Activities and Uses” below.

*Prohibited activities* are not considered appropriate as they would have long-term adverse effects on the environment or would detract significantly from the enjoyment of other park users.

## Objectives

- A. Parks provide for a range of sustainable uses, including recreational, community, Tangata Whenua customary and commercial uses.
- B. A range of visitor and outdoor recreation opportunities is made available across the regional parks network that complements and enhances the opportunities available on other public lands in the region.

## Policies

### *Sustainable Management*

- 1. To provide for activities and uses that are sustainable and contribute to a sustainable region.
- 2. To discourage activities and uses that are unsustainable or detract from a sustainable region.
- 3. To monitor the use and development of the parks and the resulting effects.

### *Range of Opportunities*

- 4. To maintain a network of parks that provides for a wide range of opportunities. Not all opportunities will be available in all parks.
- 5. To maintain a network of tracks that provide access through the parks and a range of opportunities.
- 6. To offer varied opportunities for park users by providing multiple use tracks and facilities where possible and appropriate.
- 7. To separate or prohibit uses where it is necessary to protect health and safety and environmental or heritage values, or to prevent conflicts between different activities.
- 8. When developing new tracks, to give priority to:
  - ⇒ Developing links to other important recreational areas.
  - ⇒ Developing circuits and loop tracks.
  - ⇒ Protecting environmental and heritage features.
- 9. To promote accessibility, recreation opportunities and use of facilities for people of all cultures, ages, fitness levels and physical abilities.
- 10. To provide for educational and recreational programmes within the parks.

### *Use and Development*

11. To provide for activities and uses that are appropriate to an area's character and management objectives.
12. To identify key development nodes in each park-specific management plan and concentrate intensive use and development at these nodes.
13. To provide facilities and services necessary to enhance visitor experiences and that contribute to environmental protection, maintaining recreational opportunities, interpretation and information, managing conflicting demands, and public health and safety.
14. To require park visitors and concessionaires to remove any rubbish they bring to, or generate in, the park (except at designated campgrounds, where limited rubbish facilities will be provided).

### *Access*

15. To allow for free public access to the parks subject to necessary restrictions relating to current and future:
  - ⇒ Protection of environmental, heritage and Tangata Whenua values.
  - ⇒ Maintenance of public health and safety.
  - ⇒ Management purposes<sup>10</sup>.
  - ⇒ Approved special events, leases, licences and concessions.
16. To minimise the impact of any necessary restrictions on public access.
17. To grant exclusive use of park resources only to the extent necessary to enable the carrying out of a commercial or recreational activity which could not otherwise proceed and which, in the opinion of the Council, is an activity which should be permitted in terms of the policies and objectives of this plan, and then under such conditions as the Council may impose.
18. To facilitate access to regional parks by providing an adequate number and geographical spread of park entrances.
19. To improve accessibility of facilities and services to people with disabilities.

### *Farming*

20. To allow pastoral farming where it:
  - ⇒ Contributes to the public use, enjoyment and educational potential of regional parks by augmenting the range of recreational and landscape settings available to visitors.

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<sup>10</sup> Including park maintenance and farming purposes.

- ⇒ Is consistent with the objectives for the protection and management of the natural and cultural resources of the parks.
- ⇒ Does not adversely affect significant natural or cultural values.
- ⇒ Is in accordance with, and models, good land management practices and animal husbandry.
- ⇒ Complies with all relevant statutory requirements.

#### *Removal of Natural Materials*

21. To manage the removal of materials (plants, animals, soil, rocks etc.) from the parks by a permit system. Permits will be granted or declined on the basis of the policies below<sup>11</sup>.
22. To permit the removal of natural materials under the following circumstances, as may be agreed upon by the Council, and subject to any conditions imposed:
  - ⇒ By Tangata Whenua for customary purposes.
  - ⇒ By members of the community:
    - For authorised scientific or research purposes.
    - For authorised cultural or social purposes.
    - For conservation and ecological restoration projects.
    - To hunt introduced animals.
23. To consider, when assessing applications to remove materials from the park:
  - ⇒ The ecological sustainability of the activity (in terms of impact on the area, ecosystem or species over time).
  - ⇒ The availability of alternative opportunities.

#### *Recreational Hunting*

24. 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.
25. To control recreational hunting through a permit system to ensure the safety of hunters and members of the public.

#### *Research*

26. To require permission for research in the parks where it:

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<sup>11</sup> The Regional Council does not have a role in regulating fishing within the regional parks (i.e. the removal of fish species from the parks). Fishing is regulated variously by DoC, the Ministry of Fisheries and the Fish and Game Council.

- ⇒ Requires information or access beyond that provided to the general public; and/or
- ⇒ Is intrusive or disturbs heritage features and would require Historic Places Trust consent.
- ⇒ May cause disturbance of, or require removal of, plants, animals or natural materials.

27. A copy of all research undertaken in the parks must be provided to the Regional Council.

*Natural Hazards*

- 28. To avoid siting or retaining permanent facilities and structures in natural hazard zones associated with flooding, land instability and dune systems.
- 29. To use practices that minimise erosion when carrying out works or activities.
- 30. Where erosion exists, to use appropriate mechanisms and practices to mitigate it that are in sympathy with the area’s ecological and landscape values.
- 31. To treat coastal erosion as a natural process and avoid structural interference unless:
  - ⇒ Essential park facilities or visitor safety are threatened.
  - ⇒ There is a significant risk to environmental values or cultural heritage sites.
- 32. To prohibit the public use of open fires in all parks without a permit from the relevant Rural Fire Authority.
- 33. To allow the use of portable gas barbecues and camping stoves in the parks.
- 34. To use open fires only for operational purposes where the necessary fire permits have been obtained from the relevant authority.

*Use and Occupation*

35. Activities and uses that are allowed, managed, restricted or prohibited under this plan are outlines as follows:

Category	Activity/Use
<b>Allowed</b>	<p><i>General activities</i>            The following activities may be undertaken by individuals or groups, where it is not for financial gain, subject to restrictions outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking, running and tramping.</li> <li>• Swimming.</li> <li>• Barbecues at designated sites.</li> <li>• Filming or photography for personal, family and non-commercial purposes.</li> <li>• Informal individual family or group activities including sports and games.</li> </ul> <p>In order to protect the park environment and the health, safety and wellbeing of other users and to facilitate park operations, restrictions may be placed on the activities identified above relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size of group.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location.</li> <li>• Duration.</li> <li>• Time of day.</li> <li>• Season or time of year.</li> <li>• Infrastructure conditions.</li> <li>• Environmental conditions.</li> </ul> <p><i>Dogs</i> Dogs will generally be allowed in all areas except for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specified areas of high ecological values.</li> <li>• Campsites.</li> <li>• Designated farming areas.</li> <li>• Any areas restricted to protect the park environment and the health and safety of park users and to facilitate park operations.</li> </ul> <p>Dogs must be under control at all times and owners must remove all droppings from the park.</p> <p><i>Mountain biking</i> Mountain biking will generally be allowed on tracks, except where it is specifically prohibited. Restrictions may be implemented as necessary to protect the park environment and the health and safety of park users and to facilitate park operations.</p> <p><i>Horse riding</i> Horse riding will be provided for in designated areas and/or designated tracks. Restrictions may be implemented as necessary to protect the park environment, the health and safety of park users and to facilitate park operations.</p>
<b>Managed</b>	<p>Permission or a permit will be required for the following activities undertaken for non-commercial purposes which require temporary exclusive use of an area so as to avoid over-allocation of resources and conflict between users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Camping.</li> <li>• Picnic areas or space reservations for groups.</li> <li>• Use of the Ken Gray Educational Centre or Stratton Street Woolshed.</li> <li>• Recreational hunting in designated areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Restricted</b>	<p>Case-by-case assessments of activities are required where they are not “allowed”, “managed” or “prohibited” under this plan. This includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The removal of natural materials from parks.</li> <li>• Conducting research.</li> <li>• Commercial activities.</li> <li>• Filming (e.g. documentary, movie, commercial or photo shoot).</li> <li>• Guided activities.</li> <li>• Conducting events (e.g. triathlon, horse trial events etc.).</li> <li>• Conducting one-off activities involving site occupation or use (e.g. a festival or concert, a large group picnic, selling food or drinks).</li> <li>• Building structures.</li> <li>• Use of an existing building (other than the Ken Gray Educational Centre or Stratton Street Woolshed).</li> <li>• Offering transport services.</li> <li>• Offering hire services.</li> <li>• Motorised recreation.</li> </ul> <p><i>Leases and licences</i> Leases and licences may be granted for the use of areas or sites within the parks where the use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides services or benefits to park users.</li> <li>• Is consistent with the objectives and policies of this plan and the relevant park management plan.</li> </ul> <p>Exclusive use of park resources will generally be granted only to the extent necessary to enable the carrying out of a commercial or recreational activity which could not otherwise proceed, and which, in the opinion of the Council, is an activity which should be permitted in terms of the policies and objectives of this plan, and then under such conditions as the Council may impose.</p>
<b>Prohibited</b>	<p>Any activity that is prohibited through a park-specific management plan in a particular park, or area of a park or parks.</p>

*Assessing Effects of Activities and Uses*

36. To assess the effects of proposed activities and uses that are not specifically “allowed”, “managed” or “prohibited” under this plan.
37. To assess the positive and negative effects of these proposed activities and uses over time, in terms of the factors outlined in Table 3.
38. To undertake appropriate consultation with Tangata Whenua, the community and affected parties when assessing proposed activities and uses.
39. To determine whether permission for a proposed activity or use will be granted (and if there are any necessary conditions) based on this assessment of effects.

**Table 3: Factors to Take into Account when Assessing Activities**

<b>Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity.</li> <li>• Water.</li> <li>• Air.</li> <li>• Energy.</li> <li>• Land.</li> <li>• Waste.</li> </ul>
<b>Society</b>	<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>
<b>Park management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency with legislation.</li> <li>• Consistency with park plan (including the values and potential values of the area).</li> <li>• Consistency with relevant 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>
<b>Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost to the Council.</li> <li>• Return to the Council.</li> <li>• Contribution to the regional economy.</li> </ul>

## Part C – Partnerships in Parks



## **Involving Local Communities and Neighbours**

### **The Importance of Relationships**

Continuing community involvement in parks through opportunities to enjoy, visit, learn about, participate in and protect them is a fundamental purpose of their management.

Co-operation with neighbours and local communities is vital for the effective management of the parks. There is a flow of social, economic and ecological effects between the parks and surrounding community. Plants, animals, fire, air and water do not recognise park boundaries and we can't manage parks in isolation from their surrounding environment. For example, problems of weed invasion, water pollution and impacts of domestic animals need to be addressed in co-operation with neighbours.

Other agencies play an important complementary role. DoC manages large amounts of land for conservation and recreation. Local authorities are responsible for a range of reserves and controlling land use.

Working with people who run commercial or group activities or who participate in clubs and societies involved with the parks is important to ensure good results for everyone who uses the parks.

Community partnerships and involvement with park management offer benefits for all parties including:

- Greater understanding between park managers and the community about values and needs.
- Establishment of communication and trust.
- Exchange of knowledge and skills between the Council and the community.
- Greater community support for the parks, their values and their protection.
- More eyes and ears on the ground, providing informal monitoring and reducing the need for enforcement and control.
- Additional help to get things done that might not otherwise be achieved.

### **Participation of Volunteers**

There are currently hundreds of volunteers who enhance our parks through a range of activities – from weed control to raising and planting native seedlings, helping with restoration projects and participating in policy development. These include groups of local residents, local environmental associations, park user groups, “friends” of the parks groups, individuals and many more. It is likely that volunteers will have a greater role in the future – for example in guiding and interpretation. We want to provide a volunteer programme that:

- Is effective, satisfying and has benefits for volunteers, the Council and the parks.
- Provides for different levels and types of involvement to encourage wider community involvement.
- Has a long-term focus to contribute to the long-term vision and goals for park management.
- Is planned and undertaken in collaboration with the community.
- Ensures that both the Council and volunteers have the necessary resources and skills to make their contribution.

### Information Exchange

We need to provide up-to-date and relevant information to the public about the parks. People not only want to know where the parks are and what they can do there, they also want to learn about the park histories and values. With changes to technology and the increasing use of the Internet, we need to ensure that our communication strategies are effective and reaching our communities. Encouraging learning about the parks is another important aspect of management, and we want to place a greater focus on interpretation of park values in the future. It also increases ownership and stewardship of the parks amongst the community, as we come to appreciate the wonderful natural and cultural heritage of the region.

### Objective

- A. Consistent with the Council’s management role, regional parks are used and valued by the community who are actively involved and connected with them.

### Policies

1. To encourage and support community involvement in regional parks and forests, and in particular “friends” of the parks groups.
2. To provide an effective volunteer programme which fulfils the needs of both the parks and the volunteers.
3. To promote the parks and provide accessible, relevant information to the community about park management and values.
4. To support the use of regional parks and forests as places that encourage increased learning about the environment, cultural heritage and best practice for sustainable management of the environment.
5. To consult and work with park landowners in the development of park management plans and ongoing park management.
6. To be a good neighbour and work with neighbours to ensure that issues of interest and concern are addressed in park management.
7. To co-operate with local and central government, other agencies and the community to protect the values of the regional parks and forests and maximise the benefits from them.

## **Working Together with Tangata Whenua**

### **Ongoing Relationships**

Tangata Whenua have ongoing relationships with and interests in the lands on which the regional parks are established, and seek to continue traditional practices for protecting natural and cultural heritage resources. The Council will work with Tangata Whenua to recognise and, where appropriate, provide for these in park management.

### **The Charter of Understanding**

The Charter of Understanding establishes the relationships between Tangata Whenua and the Council and guides our relationships in all areas of Council business. The Charter recognises the right of the Council 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 Interests**

Tangata Whenua have said that they want to be involved in the parks through:

- The expression of kaitiakitanga (the traditional guardianship role of Tangata Whenua) in the parks.
- 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 parks.
- Reflection of Tangata Whenua status throughout the parks, e.g. in signage.
- Employment opportunities for Iwi members.
- Providing opportunities and activities of interest and relevance to Maori in the parks.

The objectives and policies that follow set out the ways in which the Council proposes to work with Tangata Whenua to provide for these interests.

### **Treaty Claims**

Tangata Whenua have also highlighted the importance of their Treaty claims. There are a number of claims registered with the Waitangi Tribunal that cover the regional parks. Claims over central Wellington (the Port Nicholson Block) have been heard by the Tribunal and a report is due out soon. It is likely that the claimants and the Crown will then negotiate a settlement. Many other claims are potentially years away from a Tribunal hearing and resolution.

Whilst Crown land may be available for settlement of Treaty claims, land owned by the Regional Council is considered to be private land and is not available for use in Treaty settlements. The current Government policy in terms of Treaty settlements is that Council-administered reserves comprising Crown land will not be included in Treaty settlement packages without the express consent of the council concerned (see Table 1 in Section 1 for an outline of the tenure of the parks).

In managing the parks, the Council will stay informed of the status of Treaty claims and settlements and try to ensure that its actions do not compromise the ability of the Crown and Tangata Whenua to settle these longstanding grievances. For example, it will be important for the Council to consult with Tangata Whenua over any potential acquisitions of land, any changes of ownership to current park lands, or any major developments within the parks.

### Working Together

We need to work together to determine arrangements that address the Council'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. We will work towards developing relationships, and appropriate arrangements, with Tangata Whenua at a range of levels that work for both parties and the parks.

The relationship between the Council and Tangata Whenua is important in different aspects of park management. The objectives and policies outlined in this section are relevant to, and should be read in conjunction with, the remainder of the plan.

### Objectives

- A. Regional parks are managed in co-operation with Tangata Whenua.
- B. The traditional guardianship role of Tangata Whenua is recognised and provided for.
- C. Tangata Whenua interests in respect of their lands, forests, fisheries and other taonga are actively protected.

### Policies

Consistent with the Council's management role and reasonable public use and enjoyment, to work with Tangata Whenua to:

1. Develop and maintain relationships based on good faith, co-operation and understanding.
2. Determine opportunities for the practical expression of traditional guardianship roles of Tangata Whenua and the maintenance of mauri<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Defined in the *Regional Policy Statement* as the "Life principles present in all things".

3. 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.
4. Recognise Tangata Whenua knowledge in defining the cultural importance of areas, the information provided to the public, and the interpretation of Tangata Whenua histories.
5. Provide appropriate opportunities for Tangata Whenua participation in the management and protection of wahi tapu.
6. Promote awareness of, and respect for, Tangata Whenua culture, interests, heritage, language and place names within the parks.
7. Take account of relevant Treaty of Waitangi claims when developing policies and plans and making management decisions, and acquiring or disposing of lands.
8. Identify and, where appropriate, make provision for the specific recreational needs of Tangata Whenua.

## Appendix 1 – Relevant legislation

### *Local Government Act 1974*

619. Powers of Auckland and Wellington Regional Councils in relation to regional parks and reserves—

- (1) In this section, unless the context otherwise requires, “council” means the Auckland Regional Council or the Wellington Regional Council.
- (2) If a council is of the opinion that any piece of land (which is within, or reasonably close to, its region and which is not vested in any public body) should, in the interests of the region and by reason of—
  - (a) Its particular features, being—
    - (i) Natural features, landscape, native bush, or vegetation; or
    - (ii) Historic, scenic, archaeological, biological, educational, community, or cultural features or other special features or values; or
  - (b) Its recreational significance or potential; or
  - (c) Both,—

be held in perpetuity for the purpose of protecting and preserving its intrinsic worth or for the benefit, enjoyment, and use of the public (and, in particular, the public of the region), the council may purchase or otherwise acquire the piece of land or take the piece of land for a public work under the Public Works Act 1981 as a regional park or regional reserve.

- (3) No council may, under subsection (1) of this section, take land outside its region, unless the territorial authority within whose district the land is situated consents to the taking.
- (4) Any land which is vested in a public body may, if a council and the public body controlling the land so agree, be transferred to the council upon such terms as may be agreed upon between the council and the public body, or, in default of agreement, on such terms as may be determined by the Commission on the application of either party. Any land so transferred shall be held by the council subject to the trusts (if any) affecting the land at the time of the transfer, and the council shall have and may exercise all the powers and authorities in respect of the land that were possessed by the public body from which the land was transferred.
- (5) A council may set aside as a regional park or part thereof any land vested in it, and shall, in respect of any land so set aside, and in respect of any regional park or part thereof or any other land owned or occupied by the council for any other purpose, other than a public reserve subject to the Reserves Act 1977, have in addition to, and not in substitution for, any other powers possessed by a council in respect of the park or other land the power to establish and maintain botanical gardens and all the powers vested in territorial authorities by section 601 of this Act.
- (6) A council may, on any regional park owned, administered, or controlled by it, provide buildings suitable for the purposes of conducting therein a shop or kiosk at which members of the public using such regional park may purchase such articles or commodities which they may reasonably require; and the council may grant a lease or licence of the same to any person or persons, whether incorporated or not, at such rental or other consideration and for such period (with or without any right of renewal) and upon such terms and conditions as it thinks fit.

- (7) In addition to any other powers vested in it a council may from time to time in its discretion, and upon and subject to such terms and conditions as it thinks fit, make monetary grants to a local authority in or towards payment of the cost of providing, improving, or maintaining public access, whether by the road or otherwise, to a regional park or part thereof.
- (8) Any territorial authority whose district is partly or wholly within the region of the council may contribute such amounts as it thinks fit towards the establishment, maintenance, development, or extension of regional parks or regional reserves or both.
- (9) Any amount contributed under subsection (8) of this section by a territorial authority shall be in addition to any amount contributed from the district of that territorial authority by way of rates towards the establishment, maintenance, development, or extension of regional parks or regional reserves or both.

#### 619 C. Wellington regional parks

The Wellington Regional Council shall continue to have responsibility for the following regional parks:

- Battle Hill Farm Forest Park:
- Belmont Regional Park:
- East Harbour Regional Park:
- Kaitoke Regional Park
- Queen Elizabeth Park

#### 619D. Management plans for regional parks

As soon as practicable after the commencement of this section, the Auckland Regional Council and the Wellington Regional Council—

- (a) Shall each prepare and approve, and thereafter maintain, in accordance with this Act, a management plan for each regional park vested in it; and
- (b) In the exercise of its functions in relation to a regional park, shall comply with the approved management plan for that regional park.

#### 619E. Contents of management plans

Except in the case of Regional Botanic Gardens, each management plan prepared under section 619D of this Act—

- (a) Shall provide for and ensure that the public is allowed the use, enjoyment, and benefit of the park to which it relates, and of any foreshore or water area adjoining it which is not used for water supply purposes, in a manner and to an extent that is consistent with the conservation and protection of the intrinsic worth of the park; and
- (b) To that end, but without limitation, may provide, as appropriate,—
  - (i) For resource protection and management strategies; and
  - (ii) For the construction of roadways, paths, tracks, and lookouts; and
  - (iii) For parts of the regional park to be used for picnic grounds, parking places for vehicles and boats, camping grounds, launching and mooring places for boats, or for buildings and other facilities and amenities necessary for the public using the regional park or for the interpretation of the regional park to the public; and

- (iv) For the planting of flora, whether indigenous or exotic, appropriate to the regional park and its functions or for soil conservation purposes; and
- (v) For open parts of the regional park to be enclosed, laid down or renewed in grass and to be grazed; and
- (vi) For public access to part or parts of the regional park to be restricted or prohibited.

#### 619F. Public notice of preparation of first management plan

- (1) Before preparing under section 619D of this Act in respect of any regional park the first management plan for that regional park, the regional council shall—
  - (a) Give public notice of its intention to do so; and
  - (b) In that notice, invite persons and organisations interested to send to it at its office, within a time, or not later than a date, specified in the notice, written comments or suggestions on the proposed plan.
- (2) In preparing the plan, the regional council shall give full consideration to any comments or suggestions received in response to the invitation contained in the public notice.

#### 619G. Public notice of draft management plan

- (1) Every management plan prepared under section 619D of this Act shall be prepared first in draft form.
- (2) When any management plan has been prepared in draft form, the regional council shall—
  - (a) Give public notice
    - (i) Stating that the draft management plan is open for inspection at a place and at times specified in the notice; and
    - (ii) Calling upon persons and organisations interested to lodge with the regional council submissions on the contents of the draft plan by a specified date, being not less than 2 months after the first date of publication of the notice; and
  - (b) To the extent that it is practicable, send a copy of that public notice to all persons and organisations who or which had, pursuant to section 619F(1)(b) of this Act, sent written comments or suggestions to the regional council; and
  - (c) Make the draft plan available at its office for public inspection, free of charge, during ordinary office hours.

#### 619H. Obligation to consider submissions and make amendments—

The regional council—

- (a) Shall, after the date specified pursuant to section 619(2)(a)(ii) of this Act, give full consideration to any submissions received in relation to the draft management plan, and, to that end, shall give every person and organisation who or which lodged a submission the opportunity of appearing before the regional council or committee or a subcommittee thereof in support of the submission; and
- (b) Shall thereafter make such amendments to the draft management plan as it considers appropriate before approving the plan.

619I. Review and change of management plans—

- (1) A regional council that is, under section 619D of this Act, maintaining a management plan for a regional park may at any time undertake a comprehensive review of that management plan.
- (2) The purpose of the review shall be to ensure that the management plan is adapted to changing circumstances or is in accordance with increased knowledge.
- (3) Where 5 years have elapsed since any such management plan was first approved, the regional council shall undertake under this section a comprehensive review of that management plan.
- (4) In conducting a comprehensive review under this section, the regional council shall follow the procedure specified in sections 619F to 619H of this Act.
- (5) If at any time the regional council considers that a change to an approved management plan is justified, it may make a change to that approved management plan by following the procedure specified in sections 619F to 619H of this Act.

***Reserves Act***

17. Recreation reserves---

(1) It is hereby declared that the appropriate provisions of this Act shall have effect, in relation to reserves classified as recreation reserves, for the purpose of providing areas for the recreation and sporting activities and the physical welfare and enjoyment of the public, and for the protection of the natural environment and beauty of the countryside, with emphasis on the retention of open spaces and on outdoor recreational activities, including recreational tracks in the countryside.

(2) It is hereby further declared that, having regard to the general purposes specified in subsection (1) of this section, every recreation reserve shall be so administered under the appropriate provisions of this Act that---

(a) The public shall have freedom of entry and access to the reserve, subject to the specific powers conferred on the administering body by sections 53 and 54 of this Act, to any bylaws under this Act applying to the reserve, and to such conditions and restrictions as the administering body considers to be necessary for the protection and general well-being of the reserve and for the protection and control of the public using it:

(b) Where scenic, historic, archaeological, biological, geological, or other scientific features or indigenous flora or fauna or wildlife are present on the reserve, those features or that flora or fauna or wildlife shall be managed and protected to the extent compatible with the principal or primary purpose of the reserve:

Provided that nothing in this subsection shall authorise the doing of anything with respect to fauna that would contravene any provision of the Wildlife Act 1953 or any regulations or Proclamation or notification under that Act, or the doing of anything with respect to archaeological features in any reserve that would contravene any provision of [the Historic Places Act 1993]:

(c) Those qualities of the reserve which contribute to the pleasantness, harmony, and cohesion of the natural environment and to the better use and enjoyment of the reserve shall be conserved:

(d) To the extent compatible with the principal or primary purpose of the reserve, its value as a soil, water, and forest conservation area shall be maintained.

41. Management plans---(1) The administering body shall, within 5 years after the date of its appointment or within 5 years after the commencement of this Act, whichever is the later, prepare and submit to the Minister for his approval a management plan for the reserve under its control, management, or administration.

(2) The Minister may extend the time within which an administering body is required to submit its management plan to him for approval, where he is satisfied with the progress the administering body has made with the preparation of its management plan.

(3) The management plan shall provide for and ensure the use, enjoyment, maintenance, protection, and preservation, as the case may require, and, to the extent that the administering body's resources permit, the development, as appropriate, of the reserve for the purposes for which it is classified, and shall incorporate and ensure compliance with the principles set out in section 17, section 18, section 19, section 20, section 21, section 22, or section 23, as the case may be, of this Act for a reserve of that classification.

(4) The administering body of any reserve shall keep its management plan under continuous review, so that, subject to subsection (3) of this section, the plan is adapted to changing circumstances or in accordance with increased knowledge; and the Minister may from time to time require the administering body to review its management plan, whether or not the plan requires the approval of the Minister under this section.

(5) Before preparing a management plan for any one or more reserves under its control, the administering body shall---

- (a) Give public notice of its intention to do so; and
- (b) In that notice, invite persons and organisations interested to send to the administering body at its office written suggestions on the proposed plan within a time specified in the notice; and
- (c) In preparing that management plan, give full consideration to any such comments received.

(5A) Nothing in subsection (5) of this section shall apply in any case where the administering body has, by resolution, determined that written suggestions on the proposed plan would not materially assist in its preparation.

(6) Every management plan shall be prepared by the administering body in draft form in the first place, and the administering body shall---

- (a) Give public notice complying with section 119 of this Act stating that the draft plan is available for inspection at a place and at times specified in the notice, and calling upon persons or organisations interested to lodge with the administering body written objections to or suggestions on the draft plan before

a specified date, being not less than 2 months after the date of publication of the notice; and

(aa) On giving notice in accordance with paragraph (a) of this subsection, send a copy of the draft plan to the Commissioner; and (b) Give notice in writing, as far as practicable, to all persons and organisations who or which made suggestions to the administering body under subsection (5) of this section stating that the draft plan has been prepared and is available for inspection at the place and during the times specified in the notice, and requiring any such person or organisation who or which desires to object to or comment on the draft plan to lodge with the administering body a written objection or written comments before a specified date, being not less than 2 months after the date of giving of the notice; and

(c) Make the draft management plan available for inspection, free of charge, to all interested persons during ordinary office hours at the office of the administering body; and

(d) Before approving the management plan, or, as the case may require, recommending the management plan to the Minister for his approval, give every person or organisation who or which, in lodging any objection or making any comments under paragraph (a) or paragraph (b) of this subsection, asked to be heard in support of his or its objection or comments, a reasonable opportunity of appearing before the administering body or a committee thereof or a person nominated by the administering body in support of his or its objection or comments; and

(e) Where the management plan requires the approval of the Minister, attach to the plan submitted to him for approval a summary of the objections and comments received and a statement as to the extent to which they have been allowed or accepted or disallowed or not accepted.

(7) Where under subsection (4) of this section the Minister requires an administering body to review its management plan, he may direct that the administering body follow the procedure specified in subsections (5) and (6) of this section, and the administering body shall follow that procedure accordingly as if the review were the preparation of a management plan.

(8) Where in terms of its responsibilities under this Act the administering body of any reserve resolves to undertake a comprehensive review of its management plan, the administering body shall follow the procedure specified in subsections (5) and (6) of this section as if the review were the preparation of a management plan.

(9) Where under subsection (4) of this section the administering body considers any change not involving a comprehensive review to its management plan is required, it may, if it thinks fit, follow the procedure specified in subsections (5) and (6) of this section.

(10) The administering body or committee or person before which or whom any person appears at any hearing in support of any objection or comments shall determine its or his own procedure at the hearing.

(11) The administering body shall in the exercise of its functions comply with the management plan for the reserve and any amendment thereof, being, in the case of a plan or an amendment that requires the approval of the Minister, a plan or an amendment so approved.

(12) No approval by the Minister for the purposes of this section shall operate as an approval or a consent for any other purpose of this Act.

(13) Where a recreation reserve is vested in a local authority or a local authority is appointed to control and manage a recreation reserve, the local authority shall not be required to submit its management plan to the Minister for approval, unless the terms of vesting or of appointment to control and manage the reserve so require:

Provided that the local authority shall make its management plan available for inspection by or on behalf of the Minister whenever so required.

(14) The Minister may, by notice to them, require the administering bodies of reserves in any locality to consult with each other in the preparation of their management plans so that the management plans are integrated for the benefit of the locality.

(15) Where under this Act the approval or consent of the Minister is required to any action by an administering body, the Minister may, at his discretion, refuse to grant his approval or consent unless and until the administering body has submitted its management plan for approval (whether or not the plan otherwise requires the approval of the Minister under this section) and the plan has been approved by him.

(16) This section shall not apply in respect of any Government purpose reserve or local purpose reserve unless the reserve is vested in an administering body or an administering body is appointed to control and manage the reserve, and the Minister in the notice of vesting or notice to control and manage directs that this section is to apply in respect of the reserve.

### ***Resource Management Act (ss6-8)***

#### *S 6 Matters of national importance*

6. Matters of national importance---In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall recognise and provide for the following matters of national importance:

(a) The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:

(b) The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:

- (c) The protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna:
- (d) The maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes, and rivers:
- (e) The relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga.

*S7 Other matters*

7. Other matters---In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall have particular regard to---

- (a) Kaitiakitanga:
- (b) The efficient use and development of natural and physical resources:
- (c) The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values:
- (d) Intrinsic values of ecosystems:
- (e) Recognition and protection of the heritage values of sites, buildings, places, or areas:
- (f) Maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment:
- (g) Any finite characteristics of natural and physical resources:
- (h) The protection of the habitat of trout and salmon.

*S 8 Treaty of Waitangi*

8. Treaty of Waitangi---In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi).

## **Appendix 2 – Acquisition of Regional Council-Owned land within Regional Parks**

### **Battle Hill**

- Purchased in its entirety from the Crown in 1987, for plantation forestry and recreational purposes.

### **Queen Elizabeth Park**

- All Crown land.

### **Kaitoke Regional Park**

The land was either purchased by a predecessor of the Regional Council for water supply and transferred to the Regional Council upon its formation, or purchased by the Regional Council for water supply purposes. In either case, the land has been made available for recreation. Major acquisitions are:

- Ex-New Zealand Forestry Service land swapped for Council land in Orongorongo.
- Ex-Water Supply Board land transferred to the Regional Council.
- Blocks in Te Marua and Pakuratahi purchased by the Regional Council from private owners for water supply.

### **Belmont Regional Park**

Regional Council-owned land makes up around 8% of park land:

- Cornish St block – purchased from private owners in 1988 for recreation.
- Stratton St block – purchased by the Wellington Regional Water Board in 1977 from private owners for recreation.

### **East Harbour Regional Park**

Regional Council-owned blocks include:

- Lakes block – bought from the private owner in 1992 with contributions from DoC, the QEII Trust and Forest and Bird).
- Wainuiomata block – small block near Wainuiomata Coast Road purchased from the private owner (Wainuiomata Golf Club) in 1987.