



BATTLE HILL NEWSLETTER 1

Management Plan Review

History of the Park

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park was first purchased from the Crown by Greater Wellington in 1987. It was intended to provide recreational access to a working farm and an entrance to GW's forestry blocks east of the park.

The park has particular historical significance, taking its name from a hill situated at its western end where there was a significant confrontation between colonial forces and the Ngati Toa in 1846.

Ngati Toa's Te Rangihaeata had built a temporary pa on an almost unassailable razorback ridge near the summit of Battle Hill. On 6 August 1846 government forces tried to storm the pa. After a "skirmish" where three British troops were killed, the allied forces settled into a siege, bombarding the pa for several days.

As a result of the siege, Te Rangihaeata fled north, never to return to the Wellington area. Devoid of leadership and demoralised, the Ngati Toa finally conceded to the Crown's demands for the sale of their land.

For a few thousand pounds and the promise of the release of Ngati Toa's chief Te Rauparaha, the Crown extracted around 608,000 acres in the Wairau and 25,000 acres in Porirua, including what is now the Battle Hill Farm Forest Park.

The park is a long established farm and is one of the last remaining extensive pastoral properties in the Horokiri Valley. It preserves the character of historic land use established in the area over 100 years ago.

Approximately half the park is managed as part of the Council's plantation forestry estate. This plan only relates to recreational activities within the afforested areas, the balance of the area is in pasture, dotted with native and exotic trees. With the assistance of the community, GW is restoring several large wetlands and planting along the stream banks. This will help improve wildlife habitat and water quality in the Horokiri Stream.

What makes Battle Hill Farm Forest Park special?

- Public access to an operational farm
- Walking and cycling tracks in wide open spaces
- Historical significance
- 33 hectare native bush remnant
- Wetland restoration
- The Ken Gray Education Centre
- Remnant of colonial land use
- Link with the Akatarawa Forest
- Swimming and picnic spots
- Battle Hill Farm Forest Park homestead restoration

Management plan review

Management plans are agreements between Greater Wellington and the community about how a regional park will be managed. A management plan is required under the Local Government Act 1974 and if the land is gazetted for a particular reserve type then it is also a requirement of the Reserves Act 1977. The current management plan for Battle Hill Farm Forest Park was written in 1992 and is now being reviewed.

Greater Wellington approved the Regional Parks Network Management Plan in 2003. This sets out the overarching direction and management framework for all regional parks. The Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Management Plan



will provide the detailed management guidelines for the park consistent with the direction set in the Network Plan and consistent with the provisions of the Local Government Act.

The review process

We are in the initial phase of the management planning review and we want to make sure that you know what's happening in your area. It is important to us that the plan lives up to your expectations and that we address your concerns.

We have asked for people's comments by 28 April 2006. If you have any suggestions or concerns about the park or the planning process, we would like to hear your views.

We are also consulting with Porirua City Council, the Department of Conservation and Iwi about the management plan.

Once we have heard people's views and ideas, a draft management plan will be developed. The draft will be made available for public comment from June – August and there will be the opportunity to present your submission to the council later in the year. Once Council has considered all submissions the plan will be finalised in the last quarter of 2006.

Key issues for the park

GW has received some feedback about the park over recent years. Some of this includes:

- The impact Transmission Gully will have on the park character.
- The interpretation of the significant historical clash between Iwi and colonial forces
- Whether to classify the park under the Reserves Act 1977
- Formal protection of the "bush reserve"
- Introduction of Brown Teal to the park

Future management directions

Things you might like to consider:

- What do you like about the park? What don't you like about it?
- How would you like the park to look in 30 years?

- What place is there for other activities in the park, including commercial activities?
- How would you like to see the different values of the park promoted?
- Any other suggestions, issues or comments.

News from the ranger

The overriding comment from campers this year has been the increase in the dawn chorus in the bush reserve. This is partly due to the intense predator control work that staff and volunteers are carrying out. Anyone interested in getting involved in this project can contact the ranger on 237 5511.

We are noticing many more different types of events being held at Battle Hill over the past few years. Once there were mainly horse riding events but now there is a real variety. The largest of these is the Pauatahanui Country Festival in March, attended by about 10,000 people last year. Now in its fourth year, the Country Festival is becoming an icon event for the park and the region as a whole.

Early in April Battle Hill will host the start of the inaugural Pelorus Trust Porirua Grand Traverse. This is a gruelling multi sport event that will take in all the Porirua Basin has to offer. On top of this we have had a very successful Regional Outdoors Programme on the park which involved 4WD Sunset Tours, heli-tramping, horse riding for children and an evening walk to Transmission Gully.

Further information

For more information about the park and its values see:

- The current Battle Hill Farm Forest Management Plan
- The Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Plan resource information
- The Regional Parks Network Plan
- The GW website www.gw.govt.nz. Search under the key words "Battle Hill Management Plan"

These documents are available at GW offices and at public libraries.

If you do not want a copy of this newsletter sent in the future please contact Eloise Page on 04 802 0327 or email Eloise.page@gw.govt.nz

Send us your comments

We would like to hear from you. Please send your comments or suggestions to:

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Management Plan
PO Box 11646
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Or email battlehill@gw.govt.nz

Submissions close for this initial stage of consultation on 28 April 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Painting of Rangihaeata,
Rauparaha's fighting general
and chief actor in the Wairau
Massacre by R Hall, A-114-046,
Alexander Turnbull Library,
Wellington NZ

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