



Regional Parks Report 2006-07

For the year ended 30 June 2007

Quality for Life



greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Parks



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Cover

Shown here are; (1) photo view from Cannon Point; (2) photo of mountain bikers on Pakuratahi Bridge; (3) photo of walkers on Kaitoke swingbridge; (4) photo of Battle Hill; (5) photo of runner near Silverstream; and (6) photo of Kapiti from dunes.



Photos supplied by:
(1,3,4,5,6) Jessica Dewsnap.
(2) Robin Blake.

Introduction

Welcome to the *Regional Parks Report 2006-07*, Greater Wellington's first annual report about our network of regional parks.

Located up to an hour's drive from downtown Wellington, the regional parks offer a variety of landscapes including some of our region's most significant features. The opportunities and facilities cater to a wide range of people, activities and abilities. Sitting between more developed city parks and the back country 'wilderness' of the DoC estate, the regional parks provide safe and enjoyable access and are managed to protect the high quality natural environment.



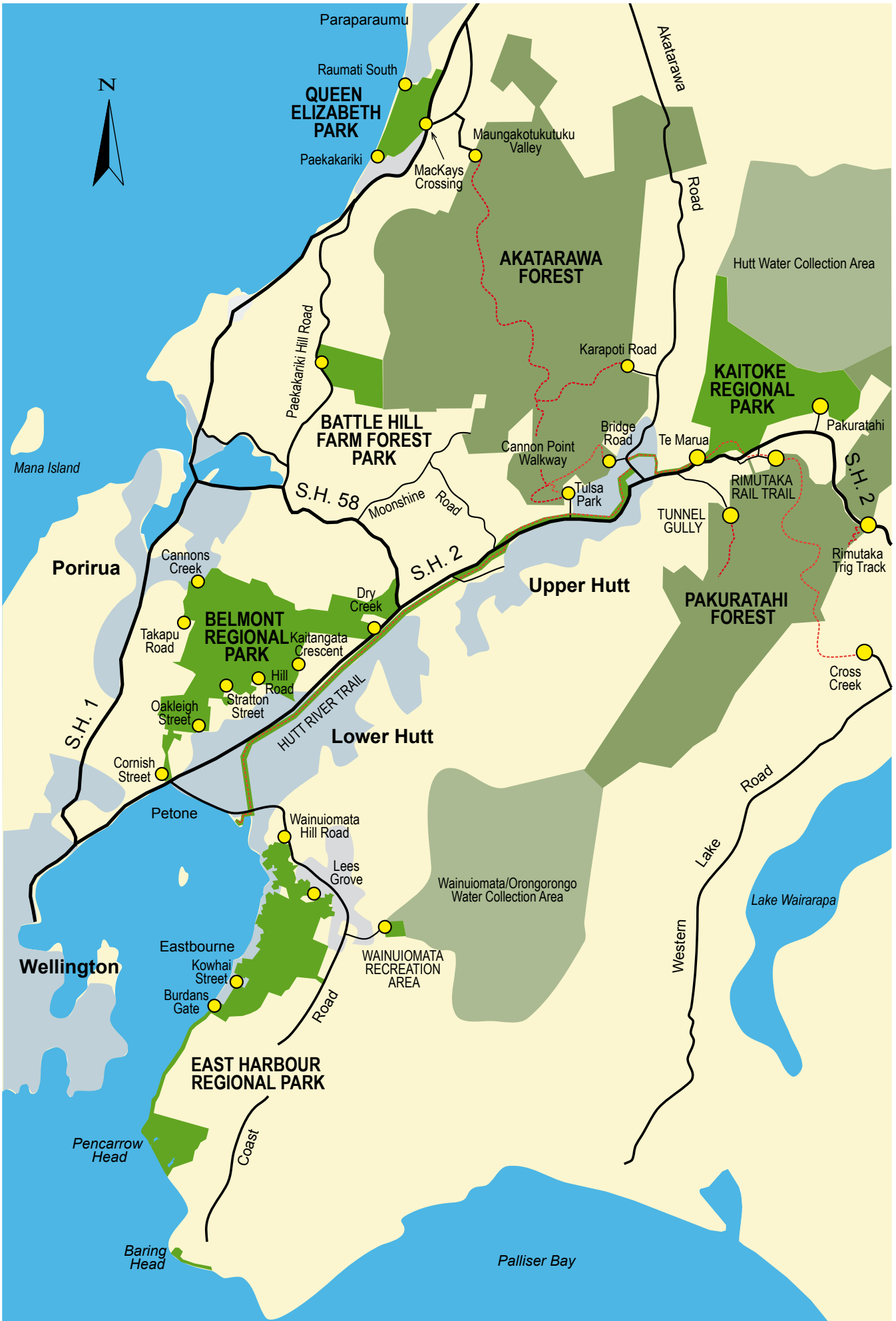
'Lighthouse & Lakes' event participants cross Lake Kohangapiripiri boardwalk, East Harbour Regional Park.

Thousands of people enjoy a simple walk, bike ride, picnic or other activity in the parks. GW also provides opportunities to stage events such as sporting competitions, school or club camps, cultural or community celebrations or festivals. The parks are becoming significant locations for commercial filming or as an itinerary stop for tourist operators.

The regional parks have a designated on-park ranger service, with some staff living at the park. They provide information, educate visitors, look after facilities and ensure compliance with council policies.



Western Mobile Ranger Dean Scott.



Map of regional parks, forests and water collection areas

The achievements in the following pages show projects in relation to individual parks. Those listed below relate to the parks network:

- The Regional Outdoors summer programme was completed with 49 events attracting 10,800 people. Attendance at GW-led events increased 12.5% over 2006 to 3,881 participants
- Greater Wellington Buggy Walks were held each month around the region in conjunction with Sport Wellington Region. Around 80 people attended each event
- We fostered ongoing relationships with Parks 'Friends' and other community groups. The December and June issues of the community newsletter *Green Shoots* were published and distributed to 1300 interested individuals and organisations
- The historic barn was restored and a new toilet block completed at Queen Elizabeth Park. The Orange Hut was rebuilt in the Akatarawa Forest and 7kms of fencing replaced in our parks
- Monitoring showed an increase in the health of the ecosystems on Council land. Pest control operations were ongoing and planning undertaken for the 1080 control work scheduled for 2007/08
- Planning for the governance structures for Whitireia Park and Lake Wairarapa Wetlands progressed. We produced a significant report on recreation activities, values, issues and opportunities in relation to Lake Wairarapa
- The reviews of our park management plans continued, with the plan for East Harbour Regional Park approved
- We commenced reviews of our Concessions Policy and related administration and Park Bylaws for controlling user behaviour
- A telephone survey of regional residents indicated that 51% of the population visited at least one regional park in the past 12 months. 90% were satisfied with their experience

How much does it cost?

Total Parks operational expenditure 2006-07: \$5.1m.

Expenditure attributable to each park is identified in the relevant sections.

The track network

Each of the park profiles below includes an analysis of the track network within each park, excluding publicly accessible roads. From our surveys we know that visitors regard tracks as one of the most important facilities in the parks. Track classes are defined as follows:

Walk: A well formed track that is clearly marked. Suitable for all visitors except in some cases narrow bridges, steps, stiles and short steep grades will exclude the less mobile, wheelchairs and 'mountain' buggies. All but the smallest watercourses are bridged.



Pakuratahi River Walk, Kaitoke Regional Park

Tramp: The track caters for relatively inexperienced trampers. It is well marked and follows the lie of the land. There may be wet and muddy sections. Grades will be steeper and longer than on 'Walking' grade tracks. A tramping track is generally more arduous.

Route: A route is generally unformed or lightly cut, and may not be maintained. It caters for experienced trampers. There is no maximum grade. Markers or poles may not be in place or they may not be visible in some weather conditions.

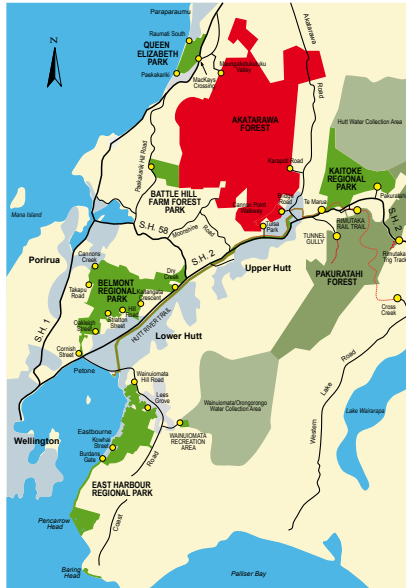


Ridge Track, Kaitoke Regional Park

Hawtrey Route, East Harbour Regional Park



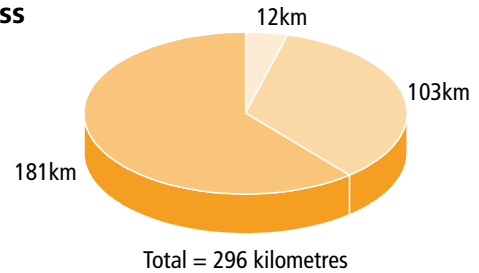
Akatarawa Forest



Park Area: 15,400 hectares

Track Class

- Walk
- Tramp
- Route



A future water collection area, this steep forested hill country contains original lowland podocarp and remnants of montane forest, exotic plantings, regenerating native forest and several wetlands. The bird and insect life is highly diverse with all the region's surviving indigenous bird species found here. The forest forms links and ecological corridors with other public land in Akatarawa, Tararua, Rimutaka and Orongorongo ranges.

It is important for mountain biking (featuring the internationally renown Karapoti Classic course), hunting and motorised recreation (4WD and motorcycling). The Cannon Point Walkway is popular for walking and running.

Park ranger: Dean Hearfield. (see pic 6)

- Construction of the 'second' Orange Hut was completed after the first hut was destroyed by fire in 2005. Akatarawa Recreation Access Committee (ARAC) volunteers' contribution of materials and labour ensured this was delivered under budget (see pic 1, 2)
- The Karapoti Classic attracted a record 1300 mountain bikers (see pic 3)
- Aerial survey for introduced pests and fungi completed. Forest looking healthy with no major infestations (see pic 4)
- Consents to enter the forest issued: 74 for 4WD events; 15 for Army/ Police training; 253 trail bike permits (see pic 5)
- Conducted aerial survey of boundary issues including condition of fences, unauthorised firewood access or 4WD tracks, any unofficial campsites
- Preparation for the 1080 possum control operation planned for July 2007 included extensive collaboration with local authorities and communication with the public. A pre-operational possum monitor reported 10.4% Residual Trap Catch (target <5% RTC). A ground-based possum control operation was established in the Cannon Point area to keep the 1080 boundary away from local suburbs (see pic 7)
- A professional goat control operation culled 113 goats, 7 pigs, 1 deer
- Pest plant infestations of old man's beard, hydrangea, buddleia, Japanese honeysuckle, cotoneaster, hops, club moss, Montpellier broom, tradescantia, Darwin's barberry, sycamore, and eleagnus were controlled

Annual expenditure: \$362,000



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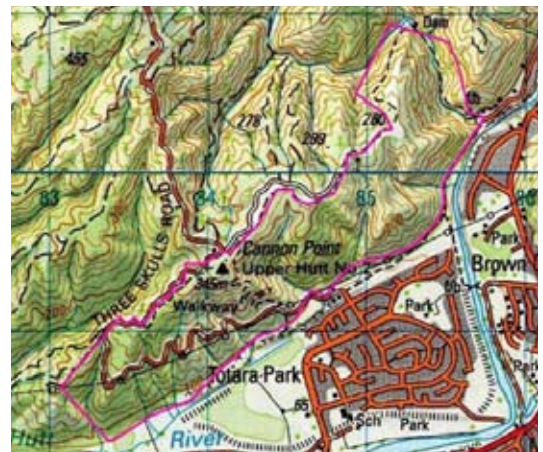
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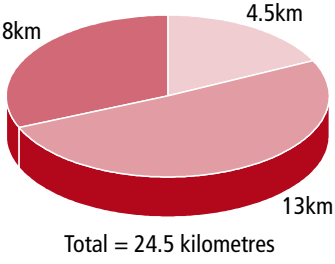
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Battle Hill Farm Forest Park



Track Class

- Walk
- Tramp
- Route



Park Area: 502 hectares

A mix of pasture, plantation forestry, wetlands and a small remnant of native forest, Battle Hill is the site of the last significant confrontation between Maori and early colonial forces in the region. The combination of flat, rolling and steeper hill country make it popular for walking, horse riding, mountain biking, camping and picnicking. Venue for the Pauatahanui Country Festival, the park is popular with schools, community groups and sports clubs.

New park ranger: Andy Marriott. (see pic 1)

- “Outstanding in the field” agriculture Careers Expo was hosted in partnership with Meat & Wool NZ at the Ken Gray education centre (see pic 2)
- Major holly control work by pest plant team in the bush remnant (see pic 3)
- Pupils from Eastern Hutt School participating in the GW Take Action environmental education programme made weta ‘hotels’ for the park (pic 4)
- Regional Outdoors Programme events included 4WD trips; heli-tramps; and horse riding and all were booked out. The park remains a popular base for pony club camps and equestrian events, camping and picnicking (see pic 5)
- Arbor Day planting in Swampy Gully drew around 150 children from three schools in Porirua City (see pic 6)
- Rodent and mustelid monitoring was carried out in bush remnant and there was ongoing pest trapping by local volunteers. There are now 190 traps and four bait lines on the property and bird life is improving significantly
- Draft of the park management plan completed
- Visitor survey completed to give more robust indications of visitor numbers and assess satisfaction with the park

Annual expenditure: \$279,000



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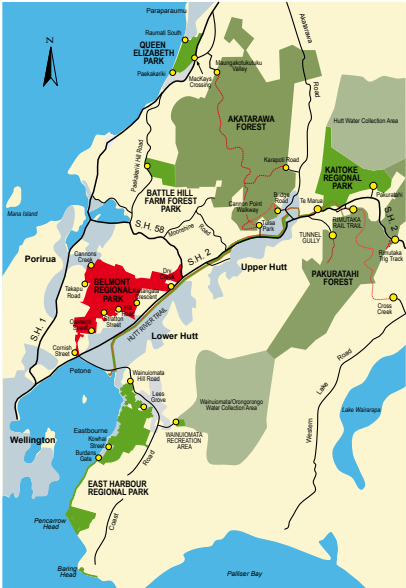


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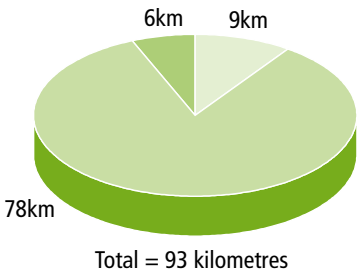
Belmont Regional Park



Park Area: 3691 hectares

Track Class

- Walk
- Tramp
- Route



Based on a central plateau that is part of an ancient rolling peneplain, the park offers views over the Hutt Valley, Wellington and Porirua Harbours. Its wide open spaces and hidden valleys make it popular for walking and tramping, running, mountain biking and horse riding. The park features the historic Korokoro Dam, World War II ammunition bunkers and the original coach road from Lower Hutt to Pauatahanui. The 22km Puke Ariki/ Haywards Korokoro Traverse takes in Boulder Hill (442m) and Belmont Trig (457m).

New park ranger: Jason Barclay. (see pic 1)

- The Friends of Belmont Regional Park ran a park open day and hosted two other guided walks as part of the Regional Outdoors Programme. They also secured Historic Places Trust protection for the Old Coach Road (see pics 2, 5)
- Constructed a new bridge over Korokoro Stream; relocated ranger office at Stratton St; worked on tracks, structures, signs (see pics 3, 7)
- Getting to know Waitangirua Farm; including changing relationships with Landcorp; balancing requirements of farming with public use
- Re-started park management plan; commenced process for determining reserve status of Waitangirua Farm
- 33 goats culled in Korokoro Valley (see pic 4)
- Ongoing possum control in Korokoro Valley (post-op monitor = 9.7% RTC) and Speedy’s Reserve. Bait station network established at Dry Creek (pre-op monitor = 13.3% RTC). Friends of Maara Roa maintain bait stations in Cannons Creek
- Friends of Maara Roa ran fortnightly planting days in Cannons Creek Valley. GW supplied 2,500 plants and hare nets to protect seedlings. The group also ran three events in the Regional Outdoors Programme (see pic 6)
- Bird numbers showing good increases in Korokoro Bush, including whiteheads and bellbirds
- Plant pest control in Korokoro Valley, Speedy’s Reserve, Dry Creek and Cannons Creek targeted species including old man’s beard, German ivy, hops, Japanese honeysuckle, tradescantia and wild ginger

Annual expenditure: \$358,000



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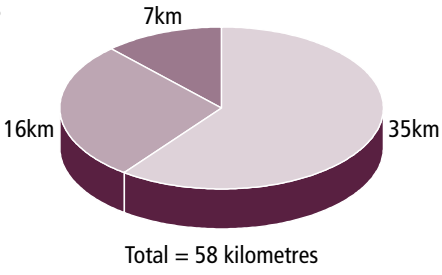
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East Harbour Regional Park



Track Class

- Walk
- Tramp
- Route



Beech/rata on the hills and lowland podocarp/broadleaf in the valleys of the Northern Forest provide the eastern backdrop to Wellington harbour and excellent walking, tramping and picnicking opportunities. The Pencarrow block contains the nationally significant freshwater Lakes Kohangapiripiri and Kohangatera, home to a wealth of native plants and wildlife.

Park Area: 2,020 hectares in three separate blocks

Park ranger: Gareth Cooper. (see pic 3)

- Completed restoration plan for Lakes block. Species and planting sites identified to aid indigenous recovery of the area (see pic 1). Intend that ridges were kept clear for recreation
- 20 goats culled from Lakes Block; 4 pigs from northern forest. Launch of hunting ballot saw 50 applicants and 2 deer shot (see pic 2)
- Ongoing improvements – Dillon St Track; Bus Barn/ Korohiwa Track. Link route opened between Day’s Bay and Eastbourne via Mt Hawtrey (see pic 4, 6)
- Aerial survey for introduced pests and fungi; measured tawa fruitfall plots
- Monthly bird monitoring in Lakes Block (Ornithological Society); bird, mustelid & rodent monitoring in northern forest (MIRO). Fish research project continuing
- Two-monthly bait station refilling in 300ha intensive control area of northern forest (MIRO). Possum numbers low (2% RTC); rat numbers slowly falling. MIRO hoping to release robins here in 2009
- Park management plan went through consultation and approval; erected mountain bike signage and barriers to regulate usage
- Events – Crazyman; Lighthouse & lakes, Mt Lowry Challenge, Butterfly Creek Night Time Madness (see pic 5)
- Major control programmes for climbing asparagus & wilding pines continued in Northern Block. Other species targeted: old man’s beard, banana passionfruit, wild ginger, Japanese honeysuckle, bomarea, ivy and smaller infestations of seven other species
- Updated and published park brochure
- We remained unable to find a publicly accessible site for the ranger’s office that was on or near the Northern Forest block

Annual expenditure: \$296,000



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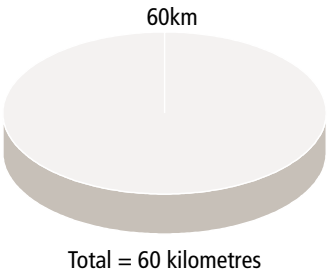


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Hutt River Trail



Track Class
 Walk



Running from Hikoikoi Reserve on the Petone foreshore to Birchville, Upper Hutt, the 29km Hutt River Trail provides easily accessible recreational opportunities to residents of the Hutt Valley. Linking to parks and sportsfields and with tracks often on both sides of the river, this lengthy, flat and scenic terrain is not readily available in the western side of the Wellington region. Off-road links are planned to the Rimutaka Rail Trail and thus to the Wairarapa. Other stakeholders include the Rotary Clubs of the Hutt Valley, the Phoenix Trust, Upper Hutt and Hutt City Councils.

River ranger: Thane Walls. (see pic 1)

- The annual Bike the Trail event attracted over 1000 riders (see pic 2, 7)
- Swimming and fishing in the river continue to be popular pastimes (see pics 3, 5)
- The second annual Hutt Gravel Grab was very successful with an estimated 660 people attending. This was also a good opportunity to educate people on the river works and appropriate use of 4WD vehicles (see pic 4)
- 2,500 native trees were planted by schools at Poets Park, Upper Hutt (see pic 6)

Annual expenditure: \$56,500



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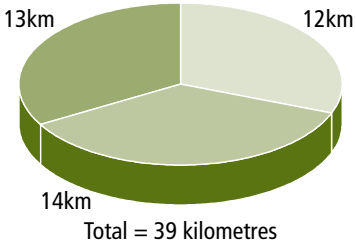
Kaitoke Regional Park



Area: 2,861 hectares

Track Class

- Walk
- Tramp
- Route



Easily accessible podocarp/ broadleaf and beech forests and a matai/totara remnant near Te Marua contain an abundance of native birds. Fish are plentiful and there are extensive opportunities to swim, picnic and walk near the Hutt and Pakuratahi Rivers. Kayaking through the Hutt River Gorge is both scenic and challenging. There is a large, landscaped camping ground near the main entrance. Kaitoke Regional Park is a significant location for outdoor commercial filming, with the Lord of the Rings 'Rivendell' site popular with visitors.

Nearly half of metropolitan Wellington's water is drawn from the Hutt River and treated within Kaitoke Regional Park

Park ranger: Steve Edwards. (see pic 1)

- In addition to the nine Regional Outdoors Programme events, the park also hosted a trolley derby, the Te Marua pony club gymkhana, several corporate and school planting days, and two Greater Wellington buggy walks (see pic 2, 5)
- There were 5000 overnight campers during the year, a slight increase over last year. Growing numbers of campers has prompted the earlier than scheduled replacement of the septic tank and discharge field. A new concrete pad in the large BBQ building now helps reduce mud tracked into the area, while drainage around the camping area has also been improved (see pic 3, 8)
- Bird transect surveys were conducted. The annual kereru count near the campground shows a positive trend in the local population (see pic 4)
- Six rainforest interpretation panels were developed and installed on the Loop Track (see pic 6). The park brochure was updated and reprinted
- The approaches to the SH2 Kaitoke underpass linking the park with the Pakuratahi forest were sealed. Signage and chicanes identify routes and deter motorbikes from the area (see pic 7)
- Five tour operators hold concessions to take visitors to the park. TVNZ and NZ Film & TV School conducted filming at various locations there during late February and March (see pic 9)
- Professional hunters culled 16 goats and 1 pig. Judas goats (which wear transmitters and lead hunters to larger herds) were again successfully deployed
- An on-park visitor survey helped us identify appropriate calibration factors for the vehicle counters at the park entrances. It also gave more in-depth understanding of visitors to the park and why they value it
- New fencing sealed off the western side of Te Marua Bush from the road, and planting commenced on land transferred to GW by Transit on the south side of the remnant. Both of these measures help protect the remnant from the impacts of humans, animals and the wind

- We controlled hawthorn, broom, sycamore, blackberry, jasmine, and Himalayan honeysuckle in the Te Marua bush remnants. Other pest plants were removed from campground and Farm Creek area

Annual expenditure: \$307,000



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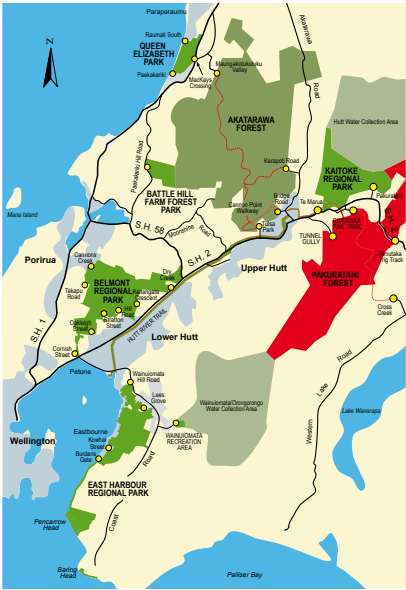


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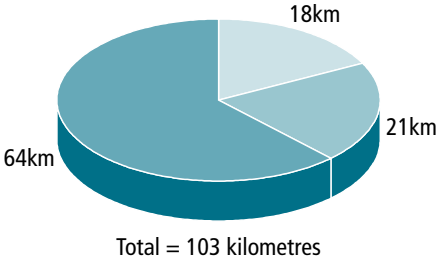
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Pakuratahi Forest



Track Class

- Walk
- Tramp
- Route



Area: just over 6,888 hectares

Managed as a future water collection area, the forest comprises one large, steep river catchment. It forms an ecological link between the Hutt and Wainuiomata water collection areas and Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges. The wetland at Ladle Bend, beech stands in the upper catchment and the only snow tussock in Rimutaka Ranges are all regionally significant. Of national significance is the original railway line formation between Wellington & Wairarapa, now popular for biking, walking and picnicking. The area contains 775ha of exotic plantation forest.

Forest ranger: Dean Hearfield. (see pic 4)

- In addition to the five Regional Outdoors Programme events, there were three MTB/ orienteering events, a horse trail riding day and the Trentham United Harriers Rimutaka Incline Fun Run Walk (see pics 1, 2, 5, 6, 7)
- Goat control operations culled 128 goats, 1 deer, 8 pigs (see pic 3)
- Aerial survey for introduced pests and fungi found that the forest was in good health
- Preparing for Mangaroa/ Kaitoke 1080 operation included volunteers maintaining a trap network in Tunnel Gully and preparation of the 'recommended dog walking area' brochure
- 'In-fill' native planting and weed removal took place at key sites along the Rimutaka Rail Trail; we expanded the totara grove planting at Summit
- Pest plant team controlled holly, ivy, Mexican daisy, eleagnus, periwinkle, buddleia, wilding pine and old man's beard
- Culverts in Tunnel Gully were repaired to ensure future ease of access

Annual expenditure: \$185,000



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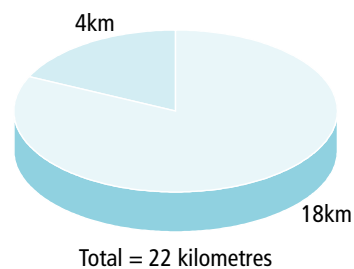
Queen Elizabeth Park



Area: 655 hectares

Track Class

- Walk
- Tramp



The last remaining area of relatively unmodified dunes on the Kapiti coastline, Queen Elizabeth Park offers easily accessible opportunities for walking, cycling, horse riding, group picnics, sports events and festivals. During the 19th century there were significant Maori villages at Wainui and Whareroa, and the park is rich in the histories of Tangata Whenua and Europeans alike. During WWII it served as a US Marine encampment and has been a public park since 1953. Facilities include the Wellington Tramway Museum, camping at Paekakariki and commercial horse riding.

Park ranger: Nikki La Monica. (see pic 1)

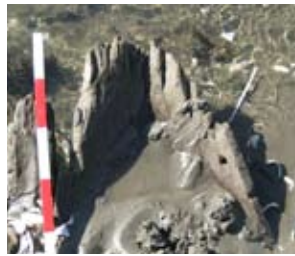
- Remnants of a waka were discovered in the Wainui Stream (see pic 2, 3)
- A new toilet block was constructed at Paekakariki (see pic 4). With the assistance of Transit NZ mitigation funding, roadway and car parking sealing and landscaping was completed around the MacKay's Crossing entrance area and the ranger's office. A planned shelter building at Paekakariki was not completed as tender prices far outweighed the project budget. This will be planned for in 2008/09
- Volunteers and staff planted more spinifex on the foredune between Whareroa Stream mouth and Raumati South entrance (see pic 5). The Coastal Track was re-formed near Raumati South to reduce erosion and cater for increased use
- Fencing of the Whareroa Stream was completed and there has been more reshaping and planting of the stream banks. A new walking route was established by the stream to provide an off-road circuit. 1500 Honda trees (and 50 people from Kapiti Honda) boosted progress (see pic 6)
- Events included the Anything Vintage Festival; Sunday Fundays; Botany of the Dunes, Landforms of the Park, Arbor Days, a GW Buggy Walk and various corporate planting days (see pic 7)
- Monitoring is showing more birds in the forest remnant and wetlands; fish research project continues; vegetation map completed and digitised on GIS (see pic 8)
- Thousands of plants went in the 16ha of wetlands and small bush remnant near MacKays Crossing. The Friends of QEP have regular potting & weeding sessions at the nursery. Plants grown from seed sourced in the remnant are used to extend edges of the remnant and to plant surrounding wetlands
- With funding from GW and support from the Friends of QEP, the old barn at MacKays Crossing was repaired and the building painted
- Several fences throughout the park were upgraded. Transit NZ installed new boundary fences at Poplar Ave and SH1

- A visitor survey was conducted in the park to better ascertain visit numbers, views and profiles of visitors. The park brochure was updated and reprinted
- Night rabbit shooting and possum control in bush and dune remnants continued. Burrow fumigation was trialled to test its effectiveness
- There was continuing control of pampas, gorse, karo, elderberry, Cape ivy, tradescantia, German ivy across the park. Blackberry, willow and Japanese honeysuckle in the Poplar Ave wetland were addressed
- The park horse-riding concession was granted to 'Stables on the Park' owner Mandy Robinson

Annual expenditure: \$499,000



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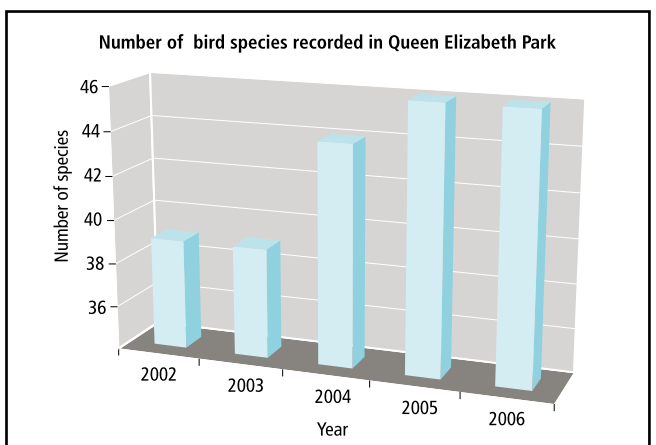
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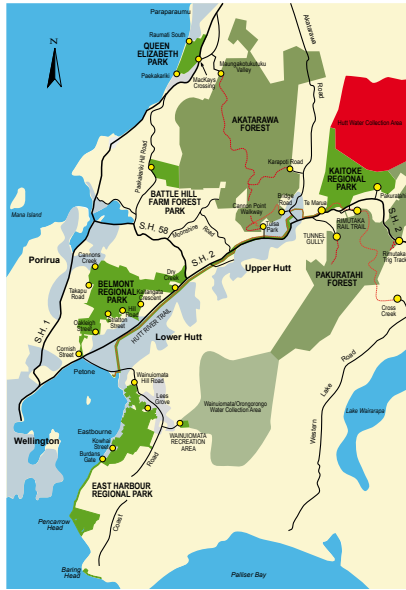


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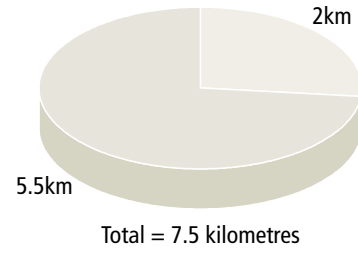
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Hutt Water Collection Area



Track Class

- Tramp
- Route



Area: 8,743 hectares

Encompassing the headwaters of the Hutt River at the southern end of the Tararua Ranges, the Hutt WCA supplies half the Wellington urban region’s drinking water. It contains extensive areas of unmodified silver beech, red beech, and valley floor podocarp forest, alpine tussock lands, alpine wet turf and sub-alpine sphagnum bog. One of the few areas in the region containing southern rata, the forest is home to a great variety of indigenous forest birds, including the rare kaka, kakariki and NZ falcon (karearea). Some hunting and tramping takes place here but the terrain is rugged and mountainous, broken by many streams and narrow, steep-sided ridges. The hilltops are extremely exposed and have a reputation for high winds, fog and sudden weather changes

Water Collection Area Ranger: Steve Edwards. (see pic 1)

- Aerial survey for introduced insects and fungi showed the forest in good health
- Monitoring included a bird transect survey and hinau fruitfall plots; photo-points were re-photographed and assessed
- Professional hunters culled 13 goats (using Judas goats), 2 pigs and 6 deer (see pic 2)
- Permanent re-vegetation plots re-measured (see pic 3)



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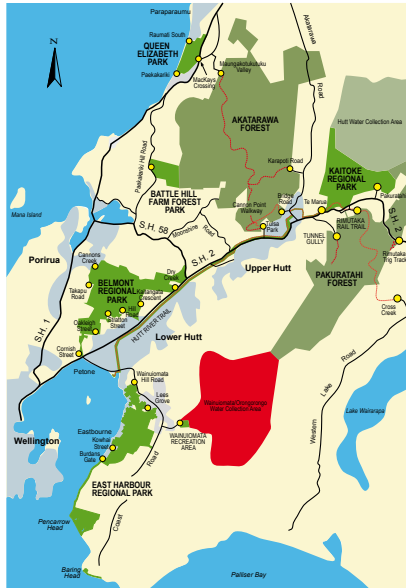


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Wainuiomata / Orongorongo WCA



Area: 7012 hectares. Managed access.

The lush native forests and clear rivers of the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo catchment areas were recognised early on for their water supply potential. In 1878 an earth dam was constructed and a pipeline laid to Wellington. Today the Wainuiomata Water Treatment Plant supplies about 20% of the water used by the four cities in the region

The forests in the Water Collection Area include superb rata podocarp, sub-tropical emergent forest above a canopy of hinau, kamahi, rewa rewa and tree ferns. Some black beech is found on drier sites, and silver beech on the high ridge-tops.

WCA ranger Scott Farrell. (see pic 1)

- Hunting ballot run again – 3 deer, 2 goats, 4 pigs culled (see pic 2)
- Aerial survey for introduced pests and fungi; bird transect survey completed; hinau and tawa fruitfall plots measured; photo points re-photographed and assessed; ungulate browse plots measured
- Catchment walking tours were included in Regional Outdoors Programme and were mostly booked out
- Regular maintenance & that following storms was carried out (see pic 4)
- 39 goats (via Judas goat programme), 3 deer and 11 pigs culled by professional hunters. Ongoing re-infestation in Orongorongo catchment from eastern & southern boundaries (see pic 3)
- Buddleia has now been removed from the catchment

Mainland Island (see pic 3)

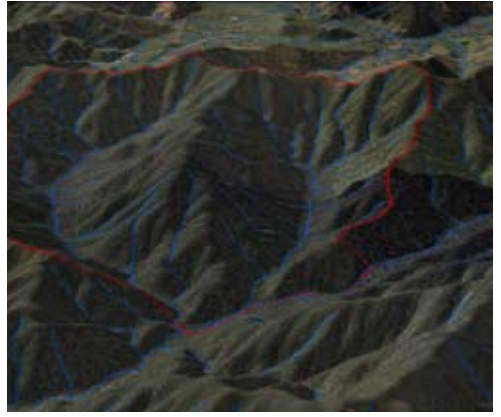
- 2-monthly bait station refill. Monitoring showed 10% rats inside area but 100% outside (in tracking tunnels)



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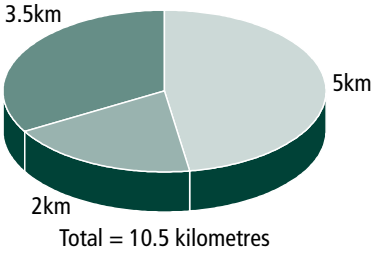
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Wainuiomata Recreation Area



Track Class

- Walk
- Tramp
- Route



Area: 338 hectares

A peaceful and sheltered valley east of Wainuiomata, the Recreation Area is a popular spot for family outings, picnics and dog walking. There are numerous swimming holes in the Wainuiomata River and easy walking and mountain biking tracks along the valley floor.

Although the Recreation Area itself was once logged and most of the bush is now regenerating, it lies at the foot of one of the largest and most pristine lowland forests in the lower North Island (the Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo Water Collection Area)

Recreation Area ranger: Scott Farrell. (see pic 1, previous page)

- The Tana Umaga Track up side of valley was completed and sign posted (see pic 1)
- Completed 'Of Gorse Of Course' planting with the NewDowse and members of a local church. Since then the church group has completed more planting days in the Recreation Area
- Infestations of ivy, holly, buddleia, Japanese honeysuckle, barberry, sycamore and tradescantia were controlled

Annual expenditure: \$51,500



Water, air, earth and energy – elements in Greater Wellington’s logo combine to create and sustain life. Greater Wellington promotes **Quality for Life** by ensuring our environment is protected while meeting the economic, cultural and social needs of the community

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