

Part Three Conservation Objectives and Policies

6.0 Protection of Natural and Historic Resources

6.1 BIODIVERSITY

6.1.1 Ecological Management Areas

Objectives

- a To protect the park's Ecological Management Areas (EMAs) from plant and animal pests in order to retain their defining biological features.
- b To improve ecosystem health within Ecological Management Areas disturbed by human-induced activities.
- c To manage the park as part of an interconnected ecological network within the region.

Policies

- 1 Key Ecological Management Areas within the park are identified and management actions prioritised for integrated site-led management.
- 2 Ecosystem management that mitigates or eliminates threats posed by plant and animal pests will be implemented for at least one Ecological Management Area.
- 3 Community support and additional resourcing will be sought for the EMAs.
- 4 Complementary management on land adjacent to the park will be encouraged, in order to create appropriate ecological links and long-term ecological sustainability of indigenous flora and fauna, through public awareness, liaison and statutory planning.

Explanation

The parks biodiversity forms a vital part of its unique natural character and is therefore of high value to the region and to the country as a whole. Although many of the indigenous plants and animals are commonly found in other parts of the country, when combined with the park's geographical, geological and climatic features they form special ecosystems and habitats.

Human induced fires, historical timber extraction, the introduction of exotic plants and animals and other activities both within and adjacent to the park have fragmented and/or isolated many of the park's biological communities. Introduced biota in particular, through a combination of predation, competition and successional interference, now seriously threaten remaining biological communities, the processes that sustain them and the many threatened species that depend on them.

Active management of biodiversity is a fundamental requirement of effective park management. This will be achieved through an integrated

site-led management approach (where a range of management activities occur, including pest/weed control and species management) that prevents further fragmentation and addresses major plant and animal pest incursions. The Ecological Management Areas, are identified sites for this approach.

To ensure that vulnerable components of the park's original biological diversity are retained, intensive species-led management will also be required for species such as kiwi, blue duck, kaka and *Powelliphanta marchanti*.

Refer to Map 5 Significant Habitats and Map 6 Managed Sites.

6.1.2 Indigenous Flora

Note: These policies should be considered in conjunction with 6.1.1 EMAs.

Objectives

- a To maintain indigenous plant diversity within the EMAs.
- b To manage priority species outside of the EMAs in accordance with the conservancy threatened plant strategy.

Policies

- 1 Priority will be given to protection of rare and threatened species in accordance with the conservancy threatened plant strategy.
- 2 Data will be collected on the distribution and population status of animal species for which there is insufficient knowledge.
- 3 Regeneration of areas which have been modified or damaged by human-induced activities may be achieved through restoration planting.
- 4 Unless there are no alternatives, only indigenous plants which have been grown from seed or cuttings collected in the park and its vicinity may be used for re-vegetation or landscaping within the park. Species will be sourced in accordance with the plant distribution limits of the Kaimanawa Forest Park Plant Species List.
- 5 The removal of indigenous plants will be prohibited unless authorised for traditional Maori or scientific purposes (refer to 8.8 Research and 9.3 Use of Forest Resources for Traditional Māori Purposes).
- 6 Trimming, cutting or spraying of indigenous plants may be permitted, for example, in order to clear existing road corridors, maintain existing tracks or to protect threatened indigenous species. This has to be consistent with other policies in this plan and an environmental impact assessment may be required for these works.

Explanation

The park supports many species of indigenous plants due to its diversity of landscapes, altitudinal range and succession processes. Some indigenous plants are threatened due to competition from invasive weeds and the effects of introduced animals, human-induced activities and climate change. Some areas of the park may require long-term restoration through re-vegetation and animal pest and invasive weed control.

Refer to Map 4 Land Cover.

6.1.3 Invasive Weeds

Note: These policies should be considered in conjunction with 6.1.1 EMAs

Objectives

- a To remove or control invasive weeds that threaten the park's natural values.
- b To prevent the establishment of and/or control the spread of new invasive weed species within the park.

Policies

- 1 Invasive weeds will be controlled under an integrated management approach at nationally high priority sites including buffer zones and seed sources. Control efforts will focus on invasive weeds that are going to endanger threatened species, change the community structure or adversely affect the successional process. All invasive weed control will be carried out in accordance with the department's national and conservancy weed management strategic plan.
- 2 Weed control will be undertaken in collaboration with other agencies with regional invasive weed management functions, including the Waikato, Manawatu-Wanganui and Hawke's Bay regional councils.
- 3 Choice of control methods will take into account potential effects on habitat and human safety. Best practice methods for all invasive weed control operations will be used, within recognised and accepted environmental guidelines.
- 4 Where appropriate, the introduction of biological control agents may be allowed to control widespread invasive weed species, for example, mouse-eared hawkweed (*Hieracium pilosella*). The effectiveness of safe and approved biological control agents will be monitored.
- 5 Invasive weed control efforts and resulting changes in ecological health will be monitored as an integral part of improving management.
- 6 Liaison and co-operation will be maintained with agencies and landowners responsible for invasive weed control on land adjacent to the park.
- 7 The department will advocate, through public awareness and statutory processes, to stop the spread of invasive weeds within the park.

Explanation

Invasive weeds are present in various parts of the park and threaten indigenous low-stature vegetation in particular. Lodge-pole pine (*Pinus contorta*) is common in some areas in the south of the park and is controlled wherever it occurs, including on privately-owned land immediately adjoining the park. Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), grey willow (*Salix cinerea*), broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), buddleia (*Buddleja davidii*) and tree lupin (*Lupinus arboreus*) are present along riparian corridors and are subject to regular control. Mouse-eared hawkweed is particularly abundant in the extreme south, especially where horses previously

degraded tussock grasslands.

Invasive weeds are managed in two ways: site-led management is undertaken at identified high priority sites to mitigate the effects of a range of invasive weeds in order to preserve these habitats; weed-led management specifically targets single species that are a major threat, are at an early stage of colonisation and can be either contained or eradicated.

Preventing new invasive weeds from becoming established requires ongoing surveillance of vulnerable habitats and of individual invasive weeds.

Management of invasive weeds involves chemical, physical and biological control. Habitat vulnerability and human safety must be considered when choosing control methods.

Refer to 6.1.7 Biosecurity and Map 6 Managed Sites.

6.1.4 Indigenous Fauna

Objectives

- a To minimise the decline of indigenous fauna diversity within the EMAs.
- b To manage priority species outside of the EMAs in accordance with the conservancy threatened animal and freshwater strategy.
- c To reintroduce species lost to the park, where practicable.

Policies

- 1 Priority will be given to the protection of rare and threatened species in accordance with the Tongariro Taupo threatened animal and freshwater strategy.
- 2 Data will be collected on the distribution and population status of animal species for which there is insufficient knowledge.
- 3 The public and specific interest groups will be encouraged to become involved in data collection, survey, monitoring and ongoing threatened species management activity.
- 4 Where feasible, species that have been lost from the park will be reintroduced whilst retaining genetic integrity.
- 5 No releases of introduced fish species will be permitted.

Explanation

Protecting and enhancing the park's indigenous fauna is essential to preserve and restore the park's natural character.

The park contains a number of threatened species that are declining and are expected to become locally extinct over the next ten years. Determining the rate of species decline is difficult without detailed monitoring of sensitive populations. Based on anecdotal evidence, it is considered that rates of decline in the park are relatively high.

Due to resource constraints and national and regional priorities, it is unlikely that populations of these species can be secured throughout the

park during the life of this plan unless additional funding opportunities become available. However, with the recognition of Ecological Management Areas (EMAs) key representative sites have been identified for intensive management to protect a range of species.

The effectiveness of active management of indigenous fauna and habitats will be monitored, which will provide information for future improvement.

The park provides a range of habitats for a variety of indigenous fauna. Although fauna is diverse, populations are not as abundant as they once were. A gradual decline of species is occurring, due primarily to animal pests. Some of the rarer species still present include whio, pepekapeka (long-tailed bats), kakariki and falcon. Kaka are sparsely distributed and there have been some sightings of the North Island brown kiwi.

The nationally endangered snail, *Powelliphanta marchanti*, is present within the Rangitikei catchment. Specific management is taking place to protect this population. Other invertebrate species of regional importance, such as peripatus worms, are known to occur.

Indigenous fish typically occur in low numbers with low species diversity. Indigenous fish have been largely overlooked in the past and certain species have either become extinct or have disappeared from large areas of traditional habitat. River headwaters in the park have always been difficult habitats for indigenous fish species with an anadromous lifecycle to reach. This restricts species found in the park to those that can climb up wet surfaces in their juvenile stages and then can either form land-locked populations or have sufficient longevity to survive and grow in the park's comparatively inhospitable habitat. Competition and predation by introduced trout is also a factor in the declining numbers of indigenous fish.

Conservation parks must be regarded as refuges for indigenous fish. Water that does not contain populations of introduced fish is uncommon and valuable. Two examples are the upper Waimarino and Tauranga-Taupū rivers, where natural barriers protect indigenous fish from competition or predation by introduced fish. In such waters, liberation of introduced fish will be prevented wherever possible.

To protect vulnerable species in the park a combination of single-species management and intensive site-led management is required.

Refer to 6.1.1 Ecosystems, Map 5 Significant Habitats, Map 6 Managed Sites and Map 7 Monitoring Locations.

6.1.5 Animal Pests

Objectives

- a To remove or control animal pests that threaten the park's natural values.
- b To prevent the establishment of and/or control the spread of new invasive animal pests in the park.

Policies

- 1 All animal pest control will be carried out in accordance with national and conservancy strategies.
- 2 Animal pests will be controlled through an integrated management approach. Control efforts will prioritise animal pests which endanger threatened species, change the community structure or adversely affect successional processes.
- 3 Significant habitat types and species that are at risk from animal pests will be identified.
- 4 Volunteer involvement and community input into animal pest control will be supported.
- 5 Liaison and co-operation on animal pest control operations will be maintained with adjoining landowners and other stakeholders within and adjacent to the park.
- 6 Wild horses that stray from adjoining private land and Defence Reserve into the southern area of the park will be destroyed.

Explanation

The introduction of red deer, sika deer, pigs, possums, horses, goats, hares, rabbits, rats, mice, cats and mustelids to the various vegetation associations of the Kaimanawa Range have caused significant ecological change over the last century. The key effects of these introduced animals are:

- competition, for example, loss of pigeon (kereru) food sources as a result of possum browse on fruit and flowers;
- predation on indigenous animals, for example, nesting failure in kiwi, whio and kaka as a result of stoat predation;
- significant habitat modification through selective browsing, for example, a shift in forest composition through removal of palatable species by deer browse; and
- loss of processes, for example, birds relied upon by mistletoes for pollination and seed dispersal reduced by the stoat population.

A key issue in the park is the management of impacts by deer. Deer have caused the replacement of palatable understorey species like five-finger and pate by unpalatable species such as horipito and crown fern, within forest habitats in the park. At localised sites, deer are also compromising canopy replacement. However, current knowledge of the effects of deer control on vegetation recovery is inadequate for allowing appropriate deer management goals to be set. During the life of this plan the main research effort for animal pests will be directed at measuring the effects of deer control in the forest west of Umukarikari Range, as a part of the national adaptive forest management experiment. The results of this work will inform future deer management in the park.

The effects of some pest species are poorly understood and research into these effects will be undertaken. There will also be research required to better understand pest control methods where current methods are inadequate. The effectiveness of current control efforts will be monitored, and the results of this will provide further information for the improvement of pest control.

Possoms are considered to have less effect on forest structures within the park, than deer but are responsible for the decline of subcanopy and canopy species such as kotukutuku, mahoe and kamahi and vulnerable species such as mistletoe. As predators, possums also destroy indigenous bird eggs, chicks and invertebrates, including rare indigenous land snails. Most possum control in the park occurs through Animal Health Board-funded tuberculosis vector control operations. During the life of this plan, these operations may be scaled back as target levels for the reduction of bovine Tuberculosis are achieved.

Hares and, to a lesser extent deer, primarily occupy the park's tussock grassland communities. Wild horses are occasionally found along the southern boundary. Their effects are similar to those of deer and possums; they selectively graze, altering the competitiveness of a plant species within the association, thereby changing its composition. Horses also cause significant hoof track damage. Understanding of the effects of hares and deer on grasslands and alpine herbfields is inadequate and no active control is currently occurring.

The most significant introduced predators present within the park are mustelids and rodents. The development of cost-effective stoat and rat control methods is essential if vulnerable species like kiwi, whio and kaka are to be protected in the park. Considerable research is underway to develop such methods.

Animal pests are managed using either a site-led or pest-led approach. Site-led management is undertaken on a sustained basis for critical pests at identified high-priority sites. Pest-led management is specifically targeted at eradicating or containing the spread of single species that are major threats. Goats, horses and pest fish species are the only animal pests currently managed with this approach. Current resourcing does not permit the additional animal control necessary to maintain or restore biodiversity values across the entire park.

Note: Certain species of introduced birds are protected through the Wildlife Act 1953 and consequently are not recognised as animal pests for the purposes of this plan.

Refer to 6.1.1 Ecosystems and 6.1.7 Biosecurity.

6.1.6 Domestic Animals

Objectives

- a To reduce or prevent adverse effects of domestic animals wherever possible.
- b To gazette any areas with high biodiversity values and/or populations of ground-nesting birds as Controlled Dog Areas.
- c To manage the balance of the park as an Open Dog Area.

Policies

- 1 The department will seek the formal gazettal of the park as an Open Dog Area, excluding the areas identified in policy 2 below.
- 2 If park values are found to be threatened by dogs their access may be

restricted or prohibited. Areas where the department may seek the gazettal of Controlled Dog Areas include those places with significant populations of ground-nesting birds, such as the Waipakihi and Oamaru river valleys and the Waikoko and Waihehe streams.

- 3 Any gazettal of Open or Controlled dog areas is subject to public consultation.
- 4 Until such time as Open and Controlled Dog Areas are gazetted, dog access within the park may be allowed by permit.
- 5 Where access for dogs is permitted there will be a limit of one dog per visitor unless specific approval is given for more, for such activities as pig hunting.
- 6 Guide dogs, dogs engaged in law and order duties or search and rescue operations and companion dogs are permitted anywhere within the park, in accordance with the Conservation Act 1987.
- 7 With the exception of guide dogs and companion dogs, dogs will be prohibited from huts and from being kennelled beneath huts.
- 8 Horses will not be permitted off formed and maintained roads.
- 9 Other domestic animals will not be permitted anywhere within the park.
- 10 The department will provide information to visitor groups, particularly hunting groups, to aid understanding of this policy and the restrictions to the Kaimanawa Open Dog Area.

Explanation

The park is one of the few public conservation areas into which dogs may be taken. Dogs are an integral part of some visitors' experience, for example, hunters. Trampers with dogs too value the opportunity to recreate in the park in the company of their pets.

Dogs must be kept under strict control, especially around huts and other facilities where they could interfere with the enjoyment of other park users. They must be kept on leashes or tied up away from huts and other high user areas. The provisions of the Dog Control Act 1996 apply in the park. This Act stipulates, among other things, that owners must ensure their dogs are kept under control at all times, that their dogs do not endanger or cause a nuisance to any person and that their dogs do not injure, endanger, or cause distress to protected wildlife.

In the past, dog access in the park has been allowed by permit but Open and Controlled dog areas have not been formally gazetted. Open Dog Areas are places where dogs may have access. Conditions may be imposed in relation to that access and/or the control of dogs in Open Dog Areas. The gazettal of Open Dog Areas in the park will achieve certainty for dog access.

Controlled Dog Areas are places where dogs may have access for specified times of the day and periods of the year. Conditions may be imposed in relation to that access and/or the control of dogs. The gazettal of Controlled Dog Areas will allow the protection of significant indigenous areas while providing for some dog access where consistent with protection. Remnant populations of ground-nesting birds, such as

whio and kiwi, are particularly susceptible to predation by dogs. Areas where the department may seek the gazettal of Controlled Dog Areas include the Waipakihi and Oamaru river valleys and the Waikoko and Waihehe streams.

Gazettal of both Open and Controlled dog areas is subject to public consultation in accordance with the Conservation Act 1987.

Horses and other pack-animals have the potential to cause significant damage to the fragile pumice and ash soil surfaces of the park and for this reason they are permitted only on formed and maintained roads.

Other domestic animals, such as cats and ferrets, are prohibited because they have the potential to kill indigenous wildlife, particularly ground-nesting birds.

Refer to 7.7 Recreational Hunting and Map 1 Management Zones.

6.1.7 Biosecurity

Objective

- a To assist biosecurity operations led by other statutory agencies.
- b Where biosecurity is a priority for conservation and is not a priority for other statutory organisations, the departments function will be to eradicate and/or control new pest incursions, where practicable.

Policies

- 1 The department will provide advice to relevant statutory agencies about biosecurity risks to indigenous species and ecosystems within the park.
- 2 The department will cooperate with all relevant statutory agencies and, wherever possible, provide technical expertise and resources to assist in biosecurity operations carried out by those agencies.
- 3 Active invasive weed surveillance will be undertaken so that the arrival of significant new species is documented and appropriate action is undertaken before irreversible colonisation occurs.
- 4 Animal pest surveillance will be undertaken so that the arrival of new species is documented and appropriate action can be taken before significant colonisation occurs.
- 5 The department will promote public education on the risks of didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*) and ways to prevent its establishment.

Explanation

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is the lead agency for New Zealand's national biosecurity systems. It administers the Biosecurity Act 1993 and its agency, Biosecurity New Zealand, has the lead role in pre-border and border control, management or eradication of unwanted organisms. Biosecurity New Zealand also leads national-scale pest-led work. However, the department retains responsibility for control of freshwater pest fish and animals listed under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977.

Regional councils have responsibility for the development and

implementation of regional pest management strategies, under the Biosecurity Act 1993. In general, regional councils do not focus their control and management of invasive weeds and animal pests on public conservation land.

The department has a responsibility to assist in biosecurity control, management and eradication and does this by delivering site-led, weed-led and animal-led pest management programmes (refer to 6.1.3 Invasive Weeds and 6.1.5 Animal Pests) as well as providing advice about biosecurity risks. Technical expertise and resources are provided wherever possible to assist in biosecurity operations lead by other statutory agencies.

In 2005 the department provided support for Biosecurity New Zealand's investigation into the presence of the aquatic weed didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*). Some rivers in the park were surveyed and as at 2005 were free of didymo. Rivers in the park are among those North Island rivers that Biosecurity New Zealand lists as being at risk of didymo invasion.

Refer to Map 8 DOC, Fish & Game and Local Authority Boundaries.

6.1.8 Ecosystem Services

Objective

a To sustain and enhance the park's ecosystem services.

Policy

1. The department will identify habitats that are vulnerable to forest collapse, resulting in a decline in ecosystem services.
2. The department will support and encourage other agencies responsible for monitoring of trends in ecosystem services, for example long term carbon monitoring plots (Ministry for Environment).
3. The department will support efforts to mitigate adverse effects on the parks ecosystem services.
4. The department will ensure the Kaimanawa Forest Park provides ecosystem services such as clean water, stable canopies and carbon sink for the Central North Island.

Explanation

The parks extensive forest cover principally provides ecosystem services including; producing oxygen and storing carbon, soil production and protecting soils especially on steeper slopes, filtering and storing water in doing so maintaining high water quality and year round quantity (used for power generation), and indirectly buffering low-land areas from flooding.

Natural ecosystems play a vital role in sustainable human development. The maintenance of acceptable living standards relies, either directly or indirectly, on healthy air, land, oceans, freshwater and biodiversity. In a study carried out in 1997 it was estimated that the annual economic value provided by New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity could be more than twice that of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

The greatest long term threat to the sustainability of these ecosystem

services is through a reduction in forest cover eg. forest collapse. This could cause a cascade of impacts including; less oxygen production and carbon storage, increased erosion leading to a decline in water quality and more sediment being carried by rivers, resulting in an increased flood risk to lowland areas.

An example of an ecosystem service cascade of impact is represented by the Lake Taupo water quality predicament.

Lake Taupo receives clean water from the park's western watershed, which is increasingly important as concerns grow about Lake Taupo's declining water quality. This decline in water quality has been predominantly caused by high nitrogen-leaching land uses. Land in indigenous vegetation, such as the park, is a land use that has a low amount of nitrogen leaching. Only land uses with a very low amount of nitrogen leaching are compatible with maintaining high water quality.

Several dominant forest tree species (including kamahi and mountain beech) are currently inadequately regenerating. Potentially these forests are at high risk of collapse as older trees die and are not adequately replaced. This is primarily due to the direct impacts of animal pests, especially possums and deer, browsing canopy trees causing death and preventing seedling regeneration.

The ongoing supply of ecosystem services 'free of charge', or gifted by nature is reliant on the continued protection of the park's natural resources. For example the Governments obligation to the Kyoto protocol may result in the necessity to sustain a stable indigenous forest cover and carbon balance. Mitigating the impacts of key threats may be required.

6.2 HISTORIC RESOURCES

Objectives

- a To identify, recognise and protect the park's historic and cultural heritage.
- b To provide for public appreciation and use where this is compatible with protection of historic resources.
- c To acknowledge not-yet-inventoried historic resources with a view to ongoing awareness and protection.

Policies

- 1 Measures will be undertaken to ensure that features of historic and archaeological interest and importance are protected.
- 2 Remedial work will be undertaken on actively-managed historic assets.
- 3 Places of historic and archaeological interest and importance will be identified and recorded by the department and, where appropriate, registered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. This will include:

- managing and reporting on actively-managed assets in the Visitor Asset Management System (VAMS);
 - entering actively-managed assets in the conservancy's Register of Actively-managed Historic Places;
 - entering passively-managed historic sites into a passively-managed list; and
 - recording all historic sites in a protected sites register.
- 4 The management of actively-managed historic assets will include:
- compiling a detailed historic record and ensuring custodianship of the resulting archives and artefacts;
 - preparing and implementing a conservation plan that will include interpretation and, where appropriate, active public use. In the case of sites like Stanfield's Whare this might include limited use by the public or camping in the vicinity of the building;
 - preparing, implementing and resourcing a long-term maintenance plan to ensure that conservation objectives are realised; and
 - managing the assets by VAMS. This system allows for the programming and costing of maintenance works and inspections.
- 5 All structures older than 30 years will be assessed for their historic significance prior to any management action which might threaten their values. Historic values will be assessed using the Historic Places Act 1993 criteria.
- 6 Modification of any historic place will be subject to the modification approval procedure as outlined in the Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy Historic Strategy 2005.
- 7 Liaison and co-operation will be maintained with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and the New Zealand Archaeological Association.
- 8 The appropriate hapū will be consulted on matters affecting Tangata whenua/Māori historic sites. Information may be the intellectual property of iwi, hapū, tangata whenua.
- 9 Restoration and interpretation of historic resources will be carried out to increase public awareness and appreciation of archaeological and historic sites and their importance to New Zealand's heritage.

Explanation

The park's historic resources contain features associated with layers of human activity. Various parts of this landscape are protected by the provisions of the Conservation Act 1987, the Historic Places Act 1993 and the Antiquities Act 1975.

The Historic Places Act 1993 promotes the identification, protection, preservation and conservation of the historic and cultural heritage of New Zealand. This Act also provides for the protection of archaeological sites. The Antiquities Act 1975 requires the protection and registration of artefacts.

To date, no features within the park have been registered as Historic Places.

Archaeological sites within the park may include Māori-related sites, including middens and pits, along with sites associated with pre-1900 historic activity, such as tracks and hut sites. Identification of these sites and consultation with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust in relation to historic resource management are of key importance.

The traditional Māori sites within the park provide a link between Māori cultural values and park management. Māori sites will be recorded and protected but site management will only be undertaken after consultation with the appropriate Ngati Tuwharetoa hapū. This will include consultation on publishing information about Māori sites.

Actively-managed historic resources:

- Stanfield's Whare

Protected and identified historic resources (passively-managed resources):

- Clements Mill Road Precinct (survey to be completed)

Sites to be identified and assessed (may lie outside boundaries of the park):

- Oamaru Pa
- Site of old Boyd Hut
- Site of old Tremaine Lodge
- Site of Boyd meat safe and corral
- Obsidian findspot NZAA N112/147
- Mutilated totara NZAA N112/148
- Te Pukehou
- Pa Waimarino NZAA N112/143
- Pits Mangakoura NZAA N112/144
- Pa Mangakowhitiwhiti

6.3 LANDSCAPE PROTECTION AND RESTORATION

Objectives

- a To protect the natural landscape of the park.
- b To design and locate facilities to minimise their effects on the natural landscape.
- c Where practicable, to restore natural landscape values compromised by adverse effects of development or natural processes.

Policies

- 1 The need for landscape works and landscape restoration will be kept to a minimum by appropriate siting and design of facilities.
- 2 Where facilities are redundant they will be removed.
- 3 Where facility design involves earthworks, those earthworks will not exacerbate natural erosion processes or have adverse effects on watercourses.

- 4 Where placement of facilities involves disturbance of vegetated landscapes a restoration and planting plan must be prepared.
- 5 Where resources allow, revegetation of areas affected by fires, major slips and the removal of invasive weed species may be undertaken in order to assist the recovery of indigenous vegetation.
- 6 Landscape restoration activities must be in accordance with the policies in 6.1.2 Indigenous Flora.

Explanation

The park has significant natural landscape values. Its relatively low level of development means that visual intrusions are minimal, so shaping the park's special character. The park is an important part of the wider Taupo catchment landscape, forming a natural backdrop that can be viewed right around the lake.

Active management of landscapes is usually only needed where facilities and services provided for the use and enjoyment of the park intrude on the natural scenery.

Sensitive siting, design and landscape construction can avoid many of the potential natural landscape effects.

Refer to 6.1.2 Indigenous Flora and 6.4 Water and Catchment.

6.4 WATER AND CATCHMENT

Objective

- a To manage water quality and quantity for the protection of intrinsic, scenic, ecological, cultural and recreational values, both within the park and downstream.

Policies

- 1 Catchment condition surveys, wild animal management and maintenance of vegetation cover (including revegetation) will be part of the active management of park catchments wherever possible.
- 2 Consultation and liaison with the Waikato, Hawke's Bay and Manawatu-Wanganui regional councils and other organisations with an interest in park waters will be maintained.
- 3 The retention of the National Water Conservation Orders for the Mohaka and Rangitikei rivers will be supported.
- 4 The gazettal of water conservation orders for the Ngaruroro, Tauranga-Taupo, Waitahanui and Hinemaiaia river systems will be investigated.

Explanation

The catchments of the park have very high regional and national significance. Besides their intrinsic, scenic, ecological and cultural values, each river rising within the park has unique features and supports important downstream values. Rivers on the park's western watershed drain into Lake Taupo. Water quality in the lake is currently declining, meaning the delivery of high quality water from the park plays an

important part in wider lake catchment quality.

Regional councils have statutory responsibilities in the park relating to soil conservation and water management. Genesis Power Ltd has an interest as waters from the park supply the Tongariro Power Scheme. Mighty River Power Ltd has an interest in park waters via Lake Taupo.

The river systems flowing from the Kaimanawa Ranges are:

- Tongariro (rising within the park as the Waipakihi River);
- Tauranga-Taupo;
- Waitahanui;
- Hinemaiaia;
- Mohaka;
- Ngaruroro; and
- Rangitikei.

All of these rivers satisfy the criteria for national water conservation order status under section 199(2) of the Resource Management Act 1991, which is that a river must have:

Outstanding wild, scenic or other natural characteristics, or outstanding recreation, fisheries, wildlife habitat, scientific or other features.

The entire length of the Rangitikei River within the park boundary is protected by the National Water Conservation (Rangitikei River) Order 1993. This includes the river from its source to the Mahikatoa Stream confluence and all its tributaries upstream of that confluence. The Mohaka River has a National Water Conservation Order over part of the river from its source to Willow Flat - the headwaters of this river lie within the park boundary.

6.5 FIRE CONTROL

Objective

- a To prevent or minimise damage by fire in the park.

Policies

- 1 Absolute priority (with the exception of safety to human life) will be given to the control and suppression of fires in or threatening the park.
- 2 Visitors will be encouraged to use portable stoves within the park as an alternative to open fires.
- 3 Liaison with adjoining rural fire authorities, adjacent landowners and park visitors will be maintained to promote safe fire practices.
- 4 Permits will be required for open fires.
- 5 Information on fire safety will be added to park signs, brochures and an updated Kaimanawa Forest Park map.
- 6 The department will agree with the New Zealand Fire Service on fire standards for backcountry huts.

- 7 All legislative requirements relating to fire control will be met and departmental policies for rural fire suppression will be followed.
- 8 The department, as a member of the Lake Taupo Rural Fire District, will continue to advocate for fire prevention measures along the boundaries of the park.
- 9 As provided for in the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977, cost recovery from those persons responsible for starting fires within, or threatening the park, will be considered.

Explanation

The department has overall responsibility for controlling and extinguishing fires within the park and within one kilometre of its boundaries, under the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977.

Fire poses the single biggest threat to the park's natural resources. The park is prone to damage by fire due to the predominance of tussock and manuka/kanuka monoao within and adjacent to its boundaries. Liaison with adjacent land owners and advocacy for safe fire practices are an important means of minimising this threat.

As part of the Departments fire readiness planning a 250,000 litre dam has been installed at Boyd Airstrip to service fixed wing water bombers in the event of a large backcountry fire.

The use of portable stoves, rather than open fires, is encouraged within the park as they assist in reducing fire risk and avoid the cutting of live wood. Throughout the year the department operates a restricted fire season, which means a permit is required for any open fire.

Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy produces a detailed annual Fire Response and Management Plan.

Refer to the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Management Strategy: 3.1.3 Fire Management.

7.0 Recreation

7.1 RECREATION GENERAL

Objectives

- a To provide a range of recreational opportunities consistent with:
 - protection of park values;
 - the Visitor Management Settings identified in Appendix A; and
 - complementary to the opportunities provided elsewhere within the Tongariro/Taupo Conservancy.
- b To provide the minimum level of facilities appropriate to visitor groups.
- c To exclude the development of facilities from the Rangitikei Remote Experience Zone.

Policies

- 1 Freedom of access and entry to the park will be maintained and public recreation and enjoyment will be fostered, where this is not inconsistent with the conservation of natural or historic resources.
- 2 The Visitor Management Settings in Appendix A will be used to assist in provision of recreation facilities and opportunities.
- 3 Recreation facilities will be managed to meet the highest environmental and safety standards and the minimum visitor standard required, in order to maintain the relatively undeveloped character of the park.
- 4 The conservancy Visitor Monitoring Plan will be implemented to determine visitor trends.
- 5 Further investigation into visitor use trends will be carried out as resources allow.
- 6 Where ecological or physical effects are considered by the department to be contrary to the protection of park values, a review of policies within this plan, or physical restrictions on numbers or sites, may occur.
- 7 No visitor facilities will be provided in the Rangitikei Remote Experience Zone.
- 8 Publicly-supported proposals from the Recreational Opportunities Review will be implemented through this plan.

Explanation

The primary reason for conservation parks is the protection of indigenous plants, animals and natural features. Low impact recreational uses are fostered where consistent with the protection of the park. Careful management is needed to ensure that recreational opportunities do not impact adversely on natural and historic resources, cultural heritage and the experiences of other people.

From its beginnings the park's strong recreation use ethic has been inextricably linked to its wilderness character. The notion of wilderness is principally a recreational and cultural concept and is, in general, compatible with conservation management objectives. 'Wilderness character', for the purposes of this plan, incorporates qualities of peace and natural quiet and a sense of remoteness and discovery, challenge, solitude and freedom that fosters self-reliance and a feeling of being at one with nature. The park's wilderness character is engendered by its particular natural and historic resources, cultural heritage, landscape features and relatively low level of human intervention.

The park offers a range of recreational opportunities including tramping, hunting, rafting, kayaking and fishing. However, because of its wilderness character, visitors need a relatively high level of skills and experience. For this reason it generally receives low use by recreation groups, with visitors in the main being experienced hunters and trampers.

To assist with protection of the park's distinctive wilderness and the provision of wilderness recreational opportunities, visitor facilities will be kept at or below current levels.

Visitor information to date has been mostly anecdotal. National and local visitor use monitoring requirements implemented in the life of this plan will improve baseline information.

In 2004 the department undertook extensive public consultation as part of its nationwide Recreation Opportunities Review. The review was aimed at confirming with the public the desired level and standard of visitor facilities provided on public conservation land. Proposals for discussion were put forward in a document, called "Toward a Better Network of Visitor Facilities". For the park, proposals included raising service standards for the Oamaru and Waipakihi huts, ceasing maintenance of the Cascade-Boyd Track, ceasing maintenance on two campsites on Kaimanawa Road, constructing a new track to the Tauranga-Taupō Waterfall and supporting community maintenance of the Rangipo Intake Road. The first two proposals - raising hut service standards and ceasing maintenance of the Cascade-Boyd Track - were strongly opposed by the public and will not be progressed. The rest of the department's proposals were generally supported by the public and provisions in this plan have been included to achieve them.

7.2 PUBLIC ACCESS

Objectives

- a To secure public access to and through the park.
- b To ensure that facilities within the park meet the reasonable needs of people with impaired mobility and comply with legislation, where appropriate.

Policies

- 1 The department will negotiate for public access to the park, while

recognising the rights and aspirations of private landowners. Public access is lacking from SH1 to the western boundary of Kaimanawa Forest Park, south of Kaimanawa Road.

- 2 The permit system for members of the public to cross the East Taupo Lands block will be supported.
- 3 The department will continue discussions with the land owners/lessees of East Taupo Lands in regard to making a payment for access on behalf of the public. The department, in conjunction with the Tongariro Taupo Conservation Board, intends to pursue further discussion with the East Taupo Lands Trust aimed at producing a satisfactory outcome for both the public and the landowner/lessee.
- 4 Existing tracks may be re-routed to improve public access.
- 5 The department will continue to work with the owners of Poronui Station with regards to ensuring practical foot access in perpetuity through the station to the park.
- 6 The department will work with community groups to identify sites where access for people with impaired mobility may be enhanced. Possible sites include the Kiko Loop Track and the Kaimanawa and Clements Mill road sites.

Explanation

The park's current track network was established approximately 25 years ago by the then Forest Service. Tracks that access the Waipakihi, Cascade and Boyd huts and Ngapuketurua trig were put through a large block of private land in the interior of the Kaimanawa Ranges without the permission of the landowners. This block is known as East Taupo Lands and is currently leased to a private company that operates an air transport and hunting and fishing business. Until 2001 the landowners and lessee allowed the public free access across the block. In 2001 the real possibility was raised of public access through the block being denied. Following discussions between the lessee and the department, the lessee established a permit system requiring a payment from members of the public seeking to cross the block. The public consultation process on the draft Kaimanawa Forest Park Management Plan (December 2005) resulted in a large number of submissions on this issue. Submitters were divided in their support or objection to the permit system. Since then, staff from the department have had initial discussions with the owners/lessees and it is clear that they wish a permit system to remain so that they have a measure of control over the public entering the private land. The department has indicated that it will support such a permit system.

Access to the park's western boundary through adjacent private land has also been difficult at times and is currently only legally available via Clements Mill Road, Kiko Road and Kaimanawa Road. During the process for renewal of resource consents for the Tongariro Power Scheme, Genesis Energy negotiated an easement on behalf of the public to allow public use of Kaimanawa Road from State Highway 1 up to the boundary of the park for the duration of its resource consent. This will secure public access to Kaimanawa Road for the life of this plan. However,

there is currently no legal public access available to the park from the Desert Road and over Tree Trunk Gorge Road, Rangipo Intake Road and Waipakitu Road. The department will continue to advocate for public vehicle access along these roads with the owners of the private land involved.

The Ngawhenua Rahui Covenant signed in 2003 between the owners of Kaimanawa 3B2A and 3B2B (the Needles Blocks) and the department included a provision to allow public access along the Tiki bank of the Waipakihi River between the Waikato Stream/ Waipakihi confluence and the Waipakihi River Gorge.

Access to the Mohaka River end of the park is via a legal paper road through Poronui Station. However, in several places this paper road does not follow a practical alignment and cannot in effect be used by the public for the purposes of access. As a consequence, the department and the Poronui Station owners came to an agreement whereby a more practical route on Poronui Station land was established. The agreement is for foot access only and does not have any legal status. The department will continue to work with the owners of Poronui Station in order to negotiate practical foot access in perpetuity through the station.

Public consultation carried out during the preparation of this draft plan indicated strong support for public access to and through the park. However, that must be balanced with the rights and aspirations of adjoining landowners.

Management options to address problems with public access include support for the current permit system, rerouting tracks to circumnavigate private land and negotiating a payment by the Crown on behalf of the public. Central to this is the development and/or maintenance of effective working relationships with neighbouring landowners and recognition of private landowner rights.

The department is required by national policy, legislation and a number of access strategies to provide access to park facilities for people with disabilities. While the department strongly subscribes to these requirements, providing access to the entire park for people with impaired mobility is problematic due to the nature of the park's terrain. A number of the roadend walks may be suitable for upgrading within this context.

Refer to 7.3 Tracks, 9.2 Working with Adjoining Landowners and Other Resource Managers, Map 2 Visitor Facilities and Map 9 Land Tenure Adjoining Kaimanawa Forest Park.

7.3 TRACKS

Objectives

- a To maintain the existing park track system for public recreation, enjoyment and safety.
- b To develop the Tauranga-Taupō Waterfall Track.

- c To mark two new routes, from Waipakihi Hut up onto the open tops of Middle Range and from Umukarikari Range to Mount Urchin.
- d To exclude the development of facilities in the Rangitikei Remote Experience Zone.

Policies

- 1 The park track system will be maintained at the existing level, with the exception of the development of the Tauranga-Taupō Waterfall Track and policy 2 below.
- 2 The department will mark two new routes from Waipakihi Hut-Middle Range and Umukarikari Range-Mount Urchin. The department will seek community assistance for track clearance and maintenance of these two routes until departmental funding for track standard 'Backcountry Adventurer' is secured.
- 3 Existing tracks may be re-routed to improve public access.
- 4 Additional track works may occur to address erosion impacts.
- 5 No tracks will be developed in the Rangitikei Remote Experience Zone, with an exception in policy 8.
- 6 Monitoring of track use through methods such as track counters and hut book analysis may occur as resources allow.
- 7 Where appropriate, 'Front Country' tracks (refer to Appendix A Visitor Management Settings) may be upgraded to provide for people with impaired mobility.
- 8 A new track is planned from the end of the Southern Access Corridor poled route to the Otamateanui River, to provide walking access into the Rangitikei River area. Access to the area previously crossed New Zealand Defence lane.

Explanation

The park's existing track system was established in the 1970s by the then Forest Service. The track system is intended to provide good access to most areas of the park while protecting the opportunities for wilderness experiences in the Rangitikei Remote Experience Zone.

The intention to develop the current Tauranga-Taupō Waterfall route as a day walk was signalled in the department's nationwide Recreation Opportunities Review 2004. Public submissions received at that time supported this proposal and, as a result, it was adopted by the department.

During the two public consultation rounds, the department was approached by a number of tramping groups and individuals in regards to re-opening routes/tracks to create access to high altitude areas and the possibility of loop tracks as opposed to one-way tracks. To better facilitate these tramping opportunities, the department agreed to re-open two routes previously used by hunters and trampers - from Waipakihi Hut onto the open tops of Middle Range and from Umukarikari Range to Mount Urchin. These routes require little work and resources to re-open and maintain.

With the exception of the Tauranga-Taupō Waterfall Track and two new

routes from Waipakihi Hut onto the open tops of Middle Range and from Umukarikari Range to Mount Urchin, the level of tracking within the interior of the park will not be increased, though some re-routing may be required in the future to improve access. However, track realignments are difficult and costly to achieve. Other methods of securing public access will be pursued in the first instance.

Track rerouting occurred in 2003 when a new route was marked from the Waiotupuritia Saddle over Maungaorangi and down to the Oamaru/ Waitawhero Stream confluence, to provide an alternative route to the private land on the true left of Te Wai O Tupuritia Stream.

Tracks in the park are not generally suitable for people with impaired mobility, though tracks such as those at the Kiko, Clements Mill and Kaimanawa roadends may be suitable for upgrading and this will be investigated.

Refer to 5.0 Management Zones, 6.3 Landscape Protection and Restoration, 7.1 Recreation General, 7.2 Public Access and Map 2 Visitor Facilities.

7.4 HUTS AND INFORMAL CAMPING

Objectives

- a To maintain the existing park hut system for public benefit, use, enjoyment and safety.
- b To continue to allow temporary informal camping.

Policies

- 1 No new huts (excluding replacements) will be built in the park.
- 2 Existing hut capacities and associated visitor facilities will only be added to if there is a clear demand and they are consistent with other management objectives.
- 3 The design, colour and construction materials of huts will harmonise with the natural landscape and/or complement the historic resources of the facility or site.
- 4 Monitoring of hut use may occur as resources allow.
- 5 When park huts become due for replacement, consideration will be given to re-siting them.
- 6 Hut fees will be charged in accordance with national guidelines.
- 7 Temporary huts may be permitted for wild animal control and other management purposes. These will be removed on completion of operations.
- 8 Temporary informal camping is permitted. Information will be made available on appropriate camping practices. Advisory notes will be provided, indicating fragile sites that users should avoid.
- 9 Unauthorised 'private huts' and polythene bivvies will be removed from the park.

Explanation

An appropriate network of public huts exists in the park and it is not expected that an extension of this network will be necessary. Any proposal to increase the number of huts in the park will require an amendment to this plan.

Boyd Hut is classed as 'serviced', that is, coal and a heater are supplied at this facility. Oamaru, Waipakihi and Cascade huts are 'standard' huts. Standard huts would not usually have coal or heating supplied. However, a management decision has been made to continue to supply these huts with fuel. Fuel is supplied in order to limit the removal of vegetation from around huts.

There is no concern at present that recreational use of park facilities is excessive. However, overcrowding can occur in huts during peak use periods, for example, during the 'roar' and holiday periods. Monitoring of visitor use is necessary to determine trends.

Problems exist with rubbish around huts and the 'pack it in-pack it out' rubbish policy will continue to be used to place responsibility for rubbish removal on hut users. Information has been placed in huts to inform the public of this policy (refer to 9.7 Waste Disposal).

Cascade Hut is poorly located for a number of reasons, including its shady, damp position. Better sites exist nearby. When the hut is replaced consideration will be given to improving the location of this facility. As other huts become due for replacement and are reviewed, re-location will be considered as part of such a review.

Informal camping is permitted throughout the park. In the past there have been problems with a proliferation of unsightly semi-permanent camps within the interior of the park. Such camps will be removed.

Refer to 6.3 Landscape Protection and Restoration, 7.1 Recreation General and Map 2 Visitor Facilities.

7.5 DAY VISITORS AND ROADSIDE CAMPING

Objectives

- a To foster day visitor use within the park by providing suitable tracks, interpretation and picnicking facilities.
- b To provide for temporary roadside camping in a limited number of locations.

Policies

- 1 Day visitor and roadside camping opportunities will be restricted to the Front Country setting on the park margins (refer to Appendix A Visitor Management Settings).
- 2 Currently managed sites will be maintained to provide for passive visitor use such as picnicking and roadside camping, with the exception of policy 3 below.
- 3 Kaimanawa Road Campsite 2 and Campsite 3 will not be maintained.

- 4 The department will promote opportunities through signage and information on brochures, maps and the internet.
- 5 Interpretive information may be developed at Kiko Road, Kaimanawa Road and/or Clements Mill Road.
- 6 Where appropriate, facilities will be provided for people with impaired mobility.

Explanation

Day visitors and people seeking car-accessible picnicing opportunities can utilise all roadends around the park. Kaimanawa, Kiko and Clements Mill roads have the most developed roadend areas with picnic facilities and short walk opportunities. Kaimanawa Road and Clements Mill roads have roadside camping areas.

Camping may include conventional tent camping or self-contained motor caravan recreation.

Kaimanawa Road campsites 2 and 3 are formed campsites off Kaimanawa Road. They have received minimal public use since they were established by the New Zealand Forest Service in 1984 and maintenance of them has now ceased. The public supported this proposal in the Recreation Opportunities Review 2004. Though these campsites are no longer maintained, they may still be used while their condition allows. Maintenance of other roadside camping areas further along Kaimanawa Road will continue.

Signage and information in brochures, maps and on the internet promotes these opportunities.

The provision of further facilities at roadends may enhance opportunities for use for people of all abilities. Opportunities for interpretive walks exist at Clements Mill Road, Kiko Road and Kaimanawa Road.

Refer to 7.1 Recreation General, 7.2 Public Access, 7.3 Tracks and Map 2 Visitor Facilities.

7.6 TRAMPING

Objectives

- a To provide for tramping within the park.
- b Where desirable, to negotiate alternative public access to the park across adjoining private land, with such access being clearly defined and maintained.
- c To provide for wilderness tramping opportunities.

Policies

- 1 On-track tramping opportunities will be provided for through the maintenance of existing tracks and huts.
- 2 The Rangitikei Remote Experience Zone will be retained to provide for wilderness tramping opportunities.
- 3 Wilderness tramping opportunities in the park will be protected

through restriction of the track and facilities system to its current level and the retention of restrictions on aircraft landing sites.

- 4 The department will work with adjoining private landowners to negotiate for public access to and through the park, while recognising the rights and aspirations of these landowners.
- 5 Liaison with groups including Federated Mountain Clubs, tramping clubs and other recreational groups will be maintained.

Explanation

Tramping is a major and popular use of the park. Within the park, the physical assistance given to the trampler is kept to a minimum through the provision of a small number of well-placed huts, tracks, poled routes and signs. This track and hut network enhances tramping opportunities while ensuring that the natural character of the park is retained.

The remote experience zone provides for untracked wilderness tramping opportunities. These opportunities are protected by the Rangitikei Remote Experience Zone policy and other policies in this plan.

Refer to 5.2 Rangitikei Remote Experience Zone, 7.1 Recreation General, 7.2 Public Access, 7.3 Tracks, Map 2 Visitor Facilities and Map 9 Land Tenure Adjoining Kaimanawa Forest Park.

7.7 RECREATIONAL HUNTING

Objective

- a To foster recreational hunting throughout Kaimanawa Forest Park.
- b To work with the hunting community constructively in order to develop a landscape management approach aimed at balancing recreational hunting opportunities and deer impact management to assist with the protection of conservation values in the park.

Policies

- 1 Recreational hunting within the park for sika and red deer and wild pigs will be encouraged.
- 2 The department will support community based initiatives to effectively manage deer hunting in the park.
- 3 The department will establish a working group which will prepare a Recreational Hunting Management Plan for the park. The principles of this plan will be expressed through a formal Memorandum of Understanding between the department and an established working group which represents the hunting community.
- 4 Information will continue to be provided to recreational hunters on areas of high deer numbers and/or areas of the park where the impacts of deer on vegetation are of concern. Where natural resources are threatened by the presence of deer, intensive recreational hunting for specified periods will be trialled in the first instance to address this threat.
- 5 Requests from recreational hunting clubs for one-off aircraft landing

permits for the purpose of accessing areas with high deer concentrations may be considered on a case-by-case basis, with the exception of policy 6 below (refer to 8.3 Aircraft).

- 6 One-off landings for organised recreational hunting groups will not be permitted in the Rangitikei Remote Experience Zone.
- 7 While acknowledging that many recreational hunters target mature male deer for trophy antlers, they will also be encouraged to specifically target female deer to help reduce overall herd densities.
- 8 The use of deer repellent during possum control operations in the Kaimanawa RHA will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The department will consult with local hunting organisations as part of this consideration. The Minister of Conservation has stated that he will consider the use of deer repellent outside RHAs on a case-by-case basis.
- 9 In the event that deer repellent is not used as a part of wild animal control operations in the Kaimanawa RHA, the department will notify this to local hunting organisations prior to that operation.
- 10 Applications for wild animal recovery operations in the Kaimanawa Recreational Hunting Area should be declined, with the exception of policy 11 below.
- 11 Where studies show that the presence of wild animals is adversely affecting conservation values, wild animal recovery operations or targeted, sponsored/subsidised aerial culling may be permitted in the Kaimanawa RHA for specified periods, where they are part of the overall recreational deer hunting management plan set out in policy 3 above. Such operations will target female deer.
- 12 Support for the adaptive forest management pilot study in the Western Kaimanawa Ecological Management Area will continue.

Explanation

Hunting is a major and legitimate recreational use in the park. The sika deer population has national and international significance as a recreational hunting resource in the park. The Kaimanawa Recreational Hunting Area (RHA) is the most heavily used RHA in the country.

Recreational hunting is the predominant means of controlling sika deer in the park and wild animal numbers generally. However, where studies show that the presence of wild animals is adversely impacting on the park's conservation values, additional control measures can be authorised. Because of the more sedentary nature of breeding female deer and the family groups associated with them, females inflict the greatest degree of environmental impact. Female deer will therefore remain the primary target of any deer control operations.

Engagement with hunting groups is a key method of ensuring quality recreational experiences while protecting park values. The principles of the relationship will be formally achieved in the park through a Memorandum of Understanding between the department and an established working group which represents the hunting community.

During public consultation carried out in the review of this plan,

recreational hunting clubs suggested that club hunts in parts of the park that have high deer concentrations may assist in controlling deer numbers. The one-off aircraft landings policy for recreational hunting clubs has been introduced for this reason.

The department's policy for use of deer repellent on public conservation land is that it may only be used in recreational hunting areas. Therefore approval of its use during possum control operations within the Kaimanawa RHA can be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Minister of Conservation has however signalled that he will consider the use of deer repellent outside of RHAs on a case-by-case basis.

A long-term study of an adaptive forest management model in the Waiotaka/Tongariro catchment is being undertaken. Adaptive forest management involves closely monitoring the effects of control measures on plants and wildlife in order to check that management efforts are achieving conservation goals, as well as to gather information on how the natural system behaves. This management model will provide detailed information regarding the management of deer species. This may serve as a model for integrated site-led management.

Refer to 5.3 Kaimanawa Recreational Hunting Area and 6.1.6 Domestic Animals.

7.8 MOUNTAIN BIKING

Objective

a Mountain biking may be allowed where it is consistent with the protection of park values.

Policies

- 1 Mountain bikes are permitted on formed and maintained roads within the Kaimanawa Forest Park.
- 2 Mountain bikes are permitted on the:
 - a. Tree Trunk Gorge-Kaimanawa Road Track;
 - b. Kiko Loop Track;
 - c. Urchin Campsite-Pillars of Hercules Track, and
 - d. Clements Mill Road-Oamaru Hut Track, via Te Iringa, (the 'Te Iringa Track') subject to policies 3-7 below.
- 3 Mountain biking will be permitted on the Te Iringa Track for an initial two-year period.
- 4 Monitoring of social and environmental impacts of mountain biking on the Te Iringa Track will be carried out. If monitoring indicates that any social or environmental impacts of mountain biking on Te Iringa Track are unacceptable mountain biking use of the track will be disallowed.
- 5 If monitoring indicates that the environmental and social impacts of mountain biking on the Te Iringa Track are minimal, mountain biking use of this track may be continued for the life of this plan. Ongoing

will be maintained on matters of mutual interest and in particular policies in this plan that affect the Rangitikei, Ngaruroro and Mohaka river catchments.

- 3 The department will work with adjoining private landowners to negotiate for public access to and through the park, while recognising the rights and aspirations of these landowners.
- 4 No new releases of introduced fish will be permitted.

Explanation

The Hawke's Bay and Wellington Fish and Game councils are responsible for the issue of sports fish and game bird licences and for the setting of related restrictions for the sustainable management of sports fisheries within parts of the park. The exception to this is the Taupo District sports fishery, which is managed by the department's Taupo Fishery Area. All sports fisheries are managed under the Conservation Act 1987.

Two rivers within the park, the Mohaka River and the Rangitikei River have National Water Conservation Orders placed over parts of them in accordance with the Resource Management Act 1991. This recognises, amongst other criteria, the importance of these rivers as recreational fishing opportunities.

The Rangitikei, Mohaka and Ngaruroro rivers provide excellent nationally and internationally recognised angling opportunities. The Rangitikei River is the most extensively fished area of the park and regularly produces large rainbow and brown trout. All three rivers are identified as being of national importance either as recreational, scenic and/or wilderness fisheries (Fisheries Environmental Report No. 28).

Access into some stretches of these rivers is difficult. During the two rounds of public consultation in the development of this draft plan, Eastern and Wellington Fish and Game submissions sought helicopter access into the Rangitikei River, within the Rangitikei Remote Experience Zone, to enable anglers to have a wilderness angling experience. However, following extensive discussions between the department and the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board it was determined that the current policy of restricting air access to designated landing sites would continue in order to protect the park's wilderness character and park values.

Park waters that do not contain populations of introduced fish are uncommon and ecologically valuable. In such waters, liberation of introduced fish will be prevented wherever possible. The upper Waimarino and Tauranga/Taupo rivers are examples; they provide important refuges for indigenous fish as they are protected from competition and predation by introduced fish by natural barriers within the rivers.

Refer to 8.3 Aircraft, Map 1 Management Zones, Map 3 Aircraft Landing Sites, Map 8 DOC, Fish & Game and Local Authority Boundaries and Map 9 DOC, Fish & Game and Local Authority Boundaries.

7.10 RAFTING AND KAYAKING

Objective

- a To maintain current levels of access for recreational rafting and kayaking, where this is consistent with the protection of park values.

Policies

- 1 Liaison with rafting and kayaking groups will continue.
- 2 The department will work with adjoining private landowners to negotiate for public access to and through the park, while recognising the rights and aspirations of these landowners.

Explanation

Rafting and kayaking are popular activities on major rivers within the park. The Tongariro River, which forms the western boundary of the park, experiences intensive use by both commercial and private rafters and kayakers. The main access for this activity is from within the park at Poutu Intake, off Kaimanawa Road.

The Mohaka, Ngaruroro and Rangitikei rivers receive less use by kayakers and rafters because access difficulties. Rafters and kayakers usually fly into put-in sites.

Because of the grade of rivers and the relative isolation from emergency services should difficulties arise, only those with a high level of skill and experience and with suitable equipment should attempt to raft and kayak in the park.

Rafters and kayakers planning to navigate the upper Mohaka River need to be aware that the stretch of river downstream of the Oamaru/Kaipō confluence is adjoined by private land on both banks and permission from the landowners is required to land.

Refer to Map 3 Aircraft Landing Sites and Map 9 Land Tenure Adjoining Kaimanawa Forest Park.

7.11 PARK INTERPRETATION, INFORMATION AND SIGNS

Objective

- a To increase visitor appreciation of park values through effective park interpretation and information.

Policies

- 1 Sign placement will be consistent with the Visitor Management Settings identified in Appendix A.
- 2 Signs will be located, and be of such a scale, design and colour, so as to harmonise with the landscape, with the exception of policy 3 below.
- 3 Where signs are provided for safety reasons they will be clearly

visible.

- 4 Information signs will be erected as appropriate at park access points.
- 5 Directional signs will be erected at track junctions and at the start of all major tracks.
- 6 The department will continue to provide signs on agreed public access routes on the boundaries of the East Taupo Lands.
- 7 Interpretive information may be developed at Kiko Road, Kaimanawa Road and/or Clements Mill Road.
- 8 The Kaimanawa Forest Park map will be updated and show current tracks, routes and land tenure.
- 9 The Tūrangī and Taupo information centres will continue to be key sites for the provision of general visitor information. More specific information about the park and recreational opportunities will be made available at the Tūrangī/Taupo Area Office and on the department's website.
- 10 To facilitate the placement of signs by organisations with statutory management roles within the park, where signs and sign placement are consistent with policies 2 and 3 above.

Explanation

Signs containing information and interpretation of park values can encourage and assist people in understanding, enjoying and protecting the park. They can also provide for public safety.

Interpretive information on park values can be used to convey to the public threats to the park and the issues surrounding management of those threats.

The guiding philosophy of the sign system in the park is minimal use for maximum effect and function.

7.12 Public Safety

Objectives

- a To inform park visitors and concessionaires, as far as practicable, of potential natural hazards in the park, while recognising visitors' primary responsibility for their own safety.
- b To co-operate with the New Zealand Police in search and rescue operations and with other organisations that have public safety and health responsibilities within the park.

Policies

- 1 Safe and responsible attitudes to use of the park will be promoted through education and interpretation.
- 2 Resources and expertise will be provided, as far as is practicable and necessary, to assist with emergency operations involving visitor safety.
- 3 Toilet facilities and water will be supplied at all huts and, where appropriate, at Front Country settings (refer to Appendix A Visitor Management Settings).

4 Responsibility for public safety will be promoted in respect of concessionaires and their operations.

Explanation

There is an element of risk in all outdoor recreational activities and it is impractical to remove that risk entirely. Each person must be responsible for their own safety, but park managers will continue to contribute to safety through information and education programmes, provision of facilities (signs, tracks, huts, bridges and the like) and by ensuring staff are well trained in first aid and relevant outdoor skills. The department applies safety and health standards when managing facilities.

Giardia is now present in water supplies throughout the New Zealand backcountry and presents a health hazard to park users. The department provides information on how to prevent giardia and design and site toilet facilities to protect waterways.