

Draft Regional Park Management Plan

Book 2 Waitakere parks.

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Anawhata SMZ

This is an example of how much the previous management actions have been reduced in the Draft RPMP. Much of the wording is taken straight from the 2010 RPMP but reduced and condensed with parts missing.

The RPMP 2010 states that the overall intention for Anawhata is to

“Manage Anawhata as a remote experience area with a small gravel carpark, toilet and directional signs.”

This is missing from the new plan and should be reinstated. It is helpful to have a statement of overall approach and policy for a particular area.

The description of Anawhata should outline that much of the beach area and dunes are in private ownership. The private land has been the subject of unwanted use by visitors and RPs must take some responsibility for bringing visitors to this point. The management action should state that regional parks will work with the private land owners to protect the environment and manage visitors.

Management intention 31 states:

“Investigate opportunities for certified self-contained vehicles to camp overnight, including at the end of Anawhata Road or in front of Craw Homestead.”

This action was contained in the RPMP 2010 and has already been actioned. It is possible now to camp with a SCV at Craw Homestead. Consequently 31 can be deleted.

Submission points:

- Manage Anawhata as a remote experience area with a small gravel carpark, toilet and directional signs.
- Maintain views from main carpark.
- Advocate for Anawhata Road to remain unsealed as part of protecting its remoteness.
- Implement sustainable farming practices on farmland (para 27).
- Undertake pest plant control (including at Whites Beach and on cliffs at Anawhata) and pest animal control, in particular, to protect penguins and grey-faced petrels at Te Waha Point.
- Implement better measures around dog control.

- Work with private land owners to protect Anawhata as a remote park.

Arataki Visitor Centre and surrounds SMZ

This part is generally acceptable but the following submission points can be made:

- Maintain Arataki as part of the Class 1 park, and delete reference to 1b.
- Support improving food offering at Arataki, including implementing the former proposal to develop a café.
- Support the Friends of Arataki and its annual Children's Day.
- In improving visibility of the Visitor Centre, do not remove vegetation in such a way that cars travelling on Scenic Drive will be visible to those in the centre or its grounds (para 44).

Cascades Kauri/Ark in the Park SMZ

- Maintain Cascades Kauri as a Class 1 park, and delete reference to 1b.
- Support developing picnic areas for groups (para 49).

Cornwallis SMZ

- Maintain Cornwallis as a Class 1 park, and delete reference to 1b.
- Support the removal of wilding pines from Puponga Point and protection of penguins and grey-faced petrels, working with volunteer groups such as Petrel Heads (paras 53 and 55).

Fairy Falls and Spragg Bush (Scenic Drive) SMZ

Kakamatua SMZ

- Support the intention to provide dog-walking options in other locations to reduce the demand and pressure on Kakamatua. This should be given urgency to avoid the degradation being caused to the riparian and forested areas.
- Improve signage about dog control at Kakamatua and work with dog control to ensure dog rules are adhered to.

Karamatura SMZ

- Maintain Karamatura as a Class 1 park, and delete reference to 1b.

Karekare SMZ

- Maintain Karekare as a Class 1 park, and delete reference to 1b.
- Restore dune systems and control lupins.

- Oppose formalising or sealing or marking up the main arrival carpark or overflow area.
- Access to the beach is currently available on the south side of the Karekare Stream without the need to cross the stream, as wrongly stated on page 217.
- Support keeping Pohutukawa Glade free of car parking.
- Any changes to carparking at the beach or at the falls to involve significant consultation with the community.

Lake Wainamu SMZ

- Maintain Wainamu as a Class 1 park, and delete reference to 1b.

Lion Rock (Piha) SMZ

- Remove pest plants such as agapanthus from Lion Rock as a priority.
- Consult iwi and stakeholders about any proposal to enable people to reach the top of Lion Rock. If it is decided not to re-open access, make sure the barriers to access are effective.

Little Huia SMZ

- Renovate Project K lodge as a priority to prevent its further deterioration.

Mercer Bay Loop Walk and lookouts (Piha) SMZ

- Maintain Mercer Bay Loop Walk and Lookouts as a Class 1 park, and delete reference to 1b.
- Protect remains of the scheduled WW2 Piha Radar Station, including removing gorse and ensuring carparking and carpark development do not impact on the remains.
- Oppose any new tracks, or rerouting of tracks through the scheduled Radar Station site.
- Oppose a short disability access walk to the coastal lookout as this is a physically constrained and highly congested location now and is unsuitable for people with physical disabilities.

Mt Donald Mclean SMZ

North Piha/Te Waha Point SMZ

- Maintain North Piha/Te Waha Point as a Class 1 park, and delete reference to 1b.
- Maintain pest plant control at N Piha and Whites Beach, including tree lupins, pampas and vetch.
- Maintain pest animal control to protect wildlife.
- Install public toilets at south end of existing sealed carpark at N Piha.
- Protect penguins and grey-faced petrels by discouraging people from going near places they are known to nest on Te Waha Point, the caves and also the cliffs behind the grassed picnic area next to the carpark.
- Provide better signage about dog rules and undertake more stringent dog control in areas where dogs are prohibited. Exclude dogs from the picnic area.

Pae o te Rangi SMZ

Pararaha Valley SMZ

- Manage the Pararaha Valley as a remote wilderness area with limited infrastructure.
- Support plant pest control as a priority especially in wetlands.
- Oppose a new hut in the Pararaha Valley as it will be vandalised and is unnecessary as the location is not far from the campgrounds at Tunnel Point and McCreadies Paddock and B&Bs at Karekare.

Pukematakeo lookout (Scenic Drive) SMZ

- Maintain Pukematakeo as a Class 1 park, and delete reference to 1b.

Rose Hellaby House and lookout (Scenic Drive) SMZ

- Manage Rose Hellaby House and gardens as a historic precinct and lookout.
- Oppose any licence that would prevent free public access to the gardens or the house which were gifted to the people of Auckland.
- Support a new licence for the house, as long as it enables some degree of public access, or a community organisation that could use it as a base.

Taitomo /Tasman and Gap lookouts SMZ

The Taitomo block of land was purchased in 2014 and was subject, firstly, to a concept plan, and then a Variation to the RPMP, which involved submissions and hearings with commissioners. This Variation was approved in 2016. Since this is recent, and was the subject of widespread consultation, it was incumbent on those drafting the RPMP to ensure that its policies were moved into the new RPMP in their entirety. However, this has not occurred. What has come through in the Plan is a much reduced version of the Variation with significant omissions.

The Variation places considerable emphasis on the risk of fire, given that within the last few decades (most recently, 2017) there have been several large fires on the land. It emphasises the need to restore and manage vegetation, prioritising control of pest plants, especially gorse on track edges and property boundaries and revegetation in fire resistant plants.

This priority was **to precede any new track development:**

“Ensure[s] new track links are only constructed once the fire risk has been reduced through the replacement of weed species with suitable native plants.” (Taitomo Variation, 7c)

This has not happened. While there is a restoration plan, the implementation has been desultory and incomplete. If you walk along Tasman Lookout Track today your legs will be scratched with gorse that has not been controlled or replaced with native planting as the Taitomo Variation contemplated.

As far as managing fire risk, the installation of a water course is incomplete. While water tanks have been installed near Piha Road, water for fire-fighting has not been made available further down the site, near Tasman Lookout Track.

In the meantime, new tracks are being developed. In mid-2019 regional parks lodged an application for an Outline Plan of Works to build a re-route of the Hillary Trail (taking it down the coastal edge from Mercer Bay Loop Track to Tasman Lookout Track) as contemplated in the Variation. The resource consent application has now been through three iterations, but has each time been sent back by the resource consent team because it fails to provide vital information, specifically, what the impact on the landscape will be of a large 1.2 m wide zig-zag track down a very prominent hillside. The Variation stresses the need to protect the area’s landscape values, and the Hillary Trail is intended for fit people, yet the current plan for the track is for people of moderate fitness and the zig-zag approach is designed to avoid steps.

In addition, the route of the track takes it close to the top of the Blowhole with a barrier fence whereas the Variation stated “Relocate[s] the track between the ‘gap’ and the ‘tennis court’ away from the edge of the blowhole for safety reasons” (7f). Once again, the Variation is not followed.

The Variation stressed the cultural importance of the site, yet the application proposes building steps into the Blowhole, impacting on a midden in the process. There has also been no action to deter people from walking over Taitomo Island (Te Kawerau a Maki land).

- Prioritise restoration before new track building.
- Mitigate the fire risk on the Taitomo block by implementing as a priority the Fire Risk Plan and Restoration and Vegetation Management Plan for Taitomo before any track building takes place.
- Remove gorse along the Tasman Lookout Track and replace with fire resistant planting.
- Ensure ongoing track and service road maintenance to control vegetation growth to create fire reduction zones (fire breaks). [This is taken from the Taitomo Variation].
- Ensure water is available for fire-fighting at The Gap and the Tasman Lookout Track. (These replace Management Intention 122 and 124).
- To protect the area's wilderness values, the Tasman Lookout Track will not be widened beyond its current width.
- Notify the resource consent application for the Taitomo Track to ensure the community can comment on it.
- Fully and independently review the impact of the proposed zigzag track and boardwalk through the herbfield on the landscape of the Taitomo block.
- Reduce the width of the planned track from 1.2 m.
- Remove built steps into the Blowhole from the plan.
- Move the boardwalk from the herb field as proposed in the application and install behind the herb field.
- Move the track between the herbfield and the blowhole from the top of the blowhole as required in the Variation.
- To protect wildlife, in particular grey faced-petrels and little blue penguins, install further dog prohibition signage at access points, and ensure it is policed by Council officers.
- Delete Management Action 126 which proposes visitor interp signage at a number of points. This is not consistent with protecting the wilderness of this site.
- Actively engage and maintain liaison, and where appropriate coordinate management programmes, with local initiatives being undertaken by key community groups, such as Piha Resident and Ratepayers Association, Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, Piha Coastcare, Protect Piha

Heritage Society, Pest Free Piha and Friends of Regional Parks. [This is taken from the Taitomo Variation].

Te Ara Tuhura/the Hillary Trail SMZ

- Maintain the Hillary Trail as a Class 1 park, and delete reference to 1b.
- Oppose the trail being upgraded to Great Walk Standard as this undermines agreements with local communities since its inception and is inconsistent with the notion of Sir Edmund Hillary preparing for his feats by training in the Waitakere Ranges.
- Oppose commercial concessions on the track except for transport providers or those providing formal youth education or development programmes, as at present, and, with the addition of mana whenua cultural concessions.
- In addition, commercial concessions are inconsistent with the legal requirements of a Scientific Reserve which the trail passes through at Whatipu/Karekare.

Wai O Kahu/Piha Valley SMZ

This is a real pressure point within the Waitakere Ranges. With most of the other forest tracks closed, people flock to this destination, which is an entry point to Kitekite Falls. The upgrading for kauri dieback has made this a very easy walk with multiple boardwalks and steps. As a result it suffers very high usage., including people going off track to access drops of the falls. Despite the risks of off-track use for spreading kauri dieback, canyoning has been allowed to resume, involving people abseiling down the falls and moving through the stream bed.

The carpark on the site of the Piha Mill Camp was supposed to be occasional overflow carparking, but has become regularised as an everyday parking site and has expanded, therefore it is difficult to know what is meant by “maximising car parking within the current footprint” as stated in the draft RPMP.

Despite several episodes of severe flooding nothing definitive has been decided about the outdoor education camp that was run under licence as Piha Mill Camp. In around 2017, a wooden fence was inexplicably erected across the scheduled site, excluding the public from the eastern end of the site. This was not part of the RPMP 2010 and there was no consultation on it. Now that the camp is not used, the fence should be removed.

There was also a proposal to bridge Kitekite Stream with a “selfie bridge” at the falls. This was proposed so that people did not have to cross the stream on foot and so they could take photos with the falls as a backdrop. Locals were alerted to this when surveyors surveyed the route and have strongly opposed it. A second bridge was also proposed at the

juncture of the Knutzen Track, even though a previous attempt to install concrete stepping stones had met with an uproar from locals and they were removed.

Despite this history of objection, this draft RPMP proposes “considering bridging the Kitekite Stream for visitor safety”.

- Maintain the Wai o Kahu as a Class 1 park, and delete reference to 1b.
- Oppose “Maximising carparking within the current footprint” if it involves further parking on the Piha Mill Camp site on the north side of Piha Stream.
- Oppose any further bridges across Kitekite Stream. In particular oppose the “Selfie Bridge” at the falls.
- Remove the wooden fence at the Piha Mill Camp as it is not needed and excludes the public from accessing parkland.
- Protect and provide interp of the large eels in Piha Stream/Wai o Kahu.
- Investigate the future of the Nigel Hanlon Hut with particular, reference to local community use.
- Commence pest plant control and restoration including riparian planting at Sir Algernon Thomas Green.

Water Catchment Area SMZ

Whatipu

- Maintain the Whatipu as a Class 1 park, and delete reference to 1b.

Whatipu Scientific Reserve SMZ

Since 2002, Auckland Council has managed the Whatipu Scientific Reserve on behalf of DOC. A Scientific Reserve is the highest protective designation parkland can be given under the Reserves Act. The reserve exists for the purpose of scientific study and education. Recently, the reserve has suffered from inadequate pest plant control with a proliferation of pest plants.

- Urgently undertake pest plant control to protect the wetland systems at Whatipu Scientific Reserve, with particular emphasis on implementing the Regional Pest Management Plan. This requires control of gorse in low stature eco-systems. Pampas and alligator weed are also in urgent need of control.
- This should not be “subject to resourcing being available” but is a duty incumbent on Council as manager of a Scientific Reserve.
- Continue to prohibit organised recreational activities within the reserve as required by the Reserves Act.

- Reroute the Hillary Trail out of the Scientific Reserve as it is inconsistent with the designation under the Reserves Act.
- Oppose an interpreted walking trail on the Piha tramway alignment through the reserve as it will facilitate people entering the very sensitive environment and is inconsistent with the designation under the Reserves Act.

Section 9 Key Stakeholders

- This section needs expanding to add other recreational and environmental groups eg tramping clubs, Petrel Heads, Pest Free Waitakere Ranges Alliance.
- There are more than three volunteer fire services.
- The surf clubs at Piha, are Piha SLSC and United North Piha SLSC.