

27. Recreation

Explanation

The Conservation Act provides for the Department to foster recreation and to allow tourism where this is consistent with the conservation of natural and historic resources. Recreation is an integral part of conservation management and is implied in other areas of the Department's responsibilities where there is a role to advocate for and to promote the benefits of conservation, including recreation, and to prepare material relating to it.

The Department has a responsibility to preserve, protect and maintain natural and historic resources for their recreational enjoyment, amongst other purposes.

For many members of the public, recreation is their main link with the natural environment and the Department's work. Recreation is, therefore, important in assisting the Department to achieve its public advocacy goals.

Wellington Conservancy

The Conservancy has high levels of recreational use and demand in its diverse landscape.

The Conservancy's strategic goals for recreation are based on the Reserves and Conservation Acts. These goals are:

- To foster recreation and allow tourism on areas managed by the Department, compatible with the conservation of natural and historic resources and the relevant legislation, and which meets visitor needs
- To achieve the maximum recreation benefits on areas managed by the Department with the resources available, subject to conservation of natural and historic resources.
- To advocate, off areas managed by the Department, the provision of recreation opportunities which complement those offered by the Department.

The key factors which characterise the outdoor recreation opportunities in the Conservancy and influence the management of recreation are:

- The large population of the southern North Island puts a big demand and pressure on recreation areas, especially those near to urban centres.
- The Department is the main provider of facilities in the back country.
- The Wellington Regional Council (WRC) takes a major role in providing Urban Fringe and Rural recreation opportunities, while the city and district councils meet needs in their own urban areas. The Department has few areas in urban and rural settings for providing recreation and does not seek to duplicate facilities offered by other agencies, however, high use is made of developed sites on the fringes of the forest parks.
- The three forest parks have a long (100 year) history of recreation use which has contributed much to the character of the region's mountain

lands and the growth of back country recreation. Maori have long used the ranges for food gathering, and the ranges have important spiritual meaning for Maori and non-Maori alike. They are special places where a visitor can escape the urban environment and recreate.

- The very diverse landscape and associated climatic conditions of the Conservancy provide a range of opportunities for recreation. Areas from coast and marine settings to river, forest and remote alpine settings are easily accessible and within easy reach of the urban centres.
- The Conservancy's special wildlife habitats, Kapiti and Mana Islands, the Lake Wairarapa Wetlands and rugged coastal areas, are or will be key recreation and tourism attractions. Rising environmental awareness and demand to participate, experience and interact with nature is increasing pressure on these natural resources close to the large population centres.

Environmentally-based tourism is increasing, and Wellington has much that is attractive to this sector of the industry. The Department manages most of the wildlife and wild land attractions and has a key role in the development of the industry, allowing development where such use does not conflict with or compromise conservation values.

- The increasing interest of international visitors in back country recreation and an expected doubling or trebling of their number to New Zealand will see a substantial rise in their use of huts, tracks and campgrounds in the Conservancy as they seek more and varied recreation opportunities, away from the famous tracks and destinations.

This trend is already reflected in the increasing interest in guided concession opportunities in the forest parks and reserves of the Conservancy.

- A regional population growth rate of 7% over the next 10 years and the rising participation of people of all ages in outdoor recreation will increase pressure on recreation resources. Western parts of the Conservancy are expected to see the greatest increase in population and recreation pressure on local sites.

The trend to an older population structure will contribute to more demand for passive recreation opportunities, while demand for the active pursuits is expected to rise gradually.

- The Department's resources to manage recreation are limited, and this will continue to be a factor in recreation planning and facility development in the Conservancy.

Kaupapa Atawhai

To date few Maori have made use of the recreational opportunities provided by the Department. Maori use of natural resources has traditionally been underpinned by spiritual and customary protocols. These activities enhance the link between the resource and the people. The term *tangata whenua*, meaning people of the land, clearly expresses the importance of the environment, the people and the interdependency of both.

The use of natural materials for medicinal, cultural and other customary purposes is an important recreational activity for Maori. Such activities also serve to preserve the unique characteristics of Maori culture and art.

The Department will seek to increase opportunities, compatible with the conservation of natural resources, for Maori to enjoy areas managed by the Department. [*refer Section 14.4, p 151*]

27.1 RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The goal of recreation planning is to meet people's recreation needs, provided that natural and historic resources are protected. Central to this is the concept of diversity, meeting a range of recreation preferences by providing as wide a range of quality recreation opportunities as possible.

Recreation management should provide opportunities for visitors to have satisfying experiences. By managing the setting and the activities in an area, the manager provides the opportunities for recreation experiences to occur.

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) describes and maps the characteristics of recreation settings, activities and experiences in outdoor recreation areas. As a method for classifying outdoor recreation, it provides a systematic approach for studying the distribution of outdoor recreation and a logical procedure for assessing potential management options; it has been adopted as a planning tool by the Department.

The ROS for the Conservancy has been mapped at 1:50,000 scale using the Department's national standards. The classes used identify six land based settings and four coastal and marine settings. These are further divided into sub-classes based on the naturalness, geological features and development of the area. This classification acknowledges that all areas cannot meet all people's needs. However a wide range of outdoor recreation experiences are being catered for regionally; within the Conservancy all ROS classes except Wilderness are found. The main features for each recreation opportunity class are summarised in Table 19, p 242. Descriptions for each ROS class are found in Appendix 6.

Characteristics of an Opportunity

The components of these recreation opportunities are:

- The activities in which people take part.
- The settings they visit.
- The experiences they gain from participation.

Setting

The physical and managerial characteristics are the features which identify each class. The physical characteristics are a measure of naturalness, the size and remoteness of an area and the difficulty of access. These are easily recognised and provide an objective basis for each ROS class.

Management characteristics are defined by the type and form of facilities, controls and restrictions placed on visitor use by the land manager. These and the controls often help to reduce conflict between user groups and reduce impacts on sites (e.g., camping in designated sites only). Within each ROS class there may be a range of facilities and regulations applied.

Activity

The activities considered appropriate for each ROS class have been selected on the grounds that they are compatible with the setting and that they are usually (or would usually be) practised in that setting. The types of activities considered appropriate vary across the spectrum of ROS classes. The diversity of activities acceptable at the Wilderness end of the spectrum is less than the diversity found at the Urban end. The number of participants recreating in the different ROS classes will depend on such characteristics of the setting as ease of access.

Experience

The experience visitors gain from recreation requires subjective assessment and has tended to play a lesser role in the definition of each ROS class. Experience is defined as the psychological outcome resulting from taking part in a desired Activity in a desired Setting. It is an attempt to describe the link between the setting and activity and the effects of these on the visitor. Experiences are only described in very general terms, and it is acknowledged there are many factors which influence this such as an individual's past experience, their expectations and present state of mind.

The number of visitors to an area, or the number of visitor contacts expected, is also used to help describe the experience by predicting the amount of interaction a visitor could expect to have with other groups of visitors.

**Management
Issues**
Providing Recreation Opportunities

In the Conservancy the Department is the main provider of recreation opportunities outside the main urban centres but manages only small pockets of land within the cities.

Territorial authorities have a key role in meeting the outdoor recreation needs of their residents. Partnerships between the Department, local government and other providers will help establish a regional identity for recreation and tourism, and will improve efficiency in the delivery of recreation services.

Consultation

The Department will continue to consult with those who have an interest in recreation and its effects on land it manages. This will include liaison with clubs and conservation groups. The Department will continue to be involved with the Tararua-Aorangi Huts Committee [*refer Section 8, p95*].

Key areas for consultation will be:

- the details of implementing the maintenance and expansion of the hut and track network, e.g., exact placement of huts and upgrading of tracks;
- establishing and monitoring “indicators of change” to the social, environmental and facility carrying capacities in the Remote and Back Country Walk-in zones;
- identifying appropriate areas and management techniques for dealing with conflicting recreation activities.

Opportunities to View Wildlife

In the Conservancy the Department manages several of New Zealand's most important wildlife areas. With a large population close at hand the Department has a unique opportunity to advocate wildlife conservation by providing for visitor access to these areas. Providing on-site interpretation will be a key way to enhance the visitor experience and promote the conservation message.

Public demand to visit the island reserves has grown in recent years as general public interest in conservation and wildlife viewing has increased. The National Wildlife Centre receives about 45,000 visitors per year, Kapiti

Island Nature Reserve has about 10,000 and Mana Island has a regular volunteer programme attracting 3,000 visitors. The Wairarapa Wetlands have superb potential for viewing water birds; however, use has been restricted by poor access and facilities. Three seal haulout sites on the south Wairarapa and Wellington coasts are popular destinations for walkers, cyclists and divers. In all these places the desire to provide for visitors must be secondary to the management of threatened species. [refer Sections 5.2, p 29; 5.5, p 40; 9.2, p 109; and 9.3, p 115]

Objectives

- 1 Enhance the range of recreation opportunities on areas managed by the Department while ensuring that they are compatible with the protection of natural and historic resources.
- 2 Provide facilities and services to enhance visitors' experiences.
- 3 Advocate the provision of recreation services, facilities, and access to other public or private land where this is compatible with the land's present or future use.
- 4 As a priority, enhance appropriate visitor access and opportunities to view indigenous species and natural communities on areas managed by the Department and to participate in conservation management work.
- 5 As a priority, consult with interested public groups and agencies to ensure that the recreation policies expressed in the CMS meet the wide range of visitor needs, now and in future.

Implementation

- 1 Recreation facilities and access will be provided to ensure a range of opportunities which meet the wide range of visitor needs and use. The planning and design of facilities will reflect the character of the setting (see Strategic Directions).
- 2 The character of the natural and historic resources, and ecological constraints, will determine the appropriateness of areas for recreation. The following factors will guide the provision and management of recreation opportunities in areas managed by the Department:
 - That the natural and historic values of the area are protected and can *sustain* the predicted recreation impacts.
 - That the characteristics of the setting are *appropriate* for the class of recreation opportunity.
 - Visitor *demand* for the activity or opportunity and the *availability* of other equivalent opportunities within the Conservancy.
 - The likely *impacts and conflicts* associated with changes in recreational use. These include the social and facilities carrying capacities.
 - Whether there are added *conservation benefits* at no extra cost to the Department.
 - That the *cultural and spiritual values* which have been identified by local iwi and other community or user groups associated with conservation resources are not threatened or changed in any way unacceptable to them.
- 3 Encourage the participation of other agencies and interest groups in planning for and providing recreation opportunities, especially those not available on land managed by the Department.
- 4 Develop recreation facilities and services to enhance visitor appreciation of indigenous flora and fauna.

- 5 Allow recreation concessions which facilitate opportunities for visitors to appreciate the indigenous flora and fauna of the Conservancy. *[refer Section 26.1, p 215]*
- 6 Where recreation development has the potential to impact significantly on natural, cultural, historical or recreation values the Department will undertake or commission an environmental impact assessment report.
- 7 The Department will consult with those who have an interest in recreation, and its effects on land it manages.

27.2 FACILITIES

Recreation facilities are provided for two reasons:

- To encourage and enhance recreation;
- To protect the environment and the recreation experience.

The range of visitor facilities provided by the Department includes huts, tracks, bridges, carparks, toilets, camping and picnic sites, lodges and shelters. Most recreation facilities discussed in the CMS already exist, and few new facilities are planned.

Management Issues

Over-use

Patterns of participation in recreation reveal that areas often attract increasing numbers of visitors as they become better known. Management response to visitor pressure is often to upgrade facilities, and as a result more people are attracted. More and better facilities with increasing numbers of visitors can change the recreation experience or compound impact on the site. Alternative management action can alter this trend through dispersal of visitors and limiting development to predetermined levels. *[See also Section 27.4, p 246].*

Facilities Core Network

There is a long history of back country recreation in the Conservancy. Tramping and hunting clubs cut tracks and built huts for their members, and the New Zealand Forest Service expanded that network as part of its animal control programme. Clubs maintain and provide facilities on a voluntary basis. Club huts are unlicensed provided they are available for public use and are maintained to standards set by the Department.

The Department and clubs co-operate through the Tararua-Aorangi Huts Committee to administer the huts in Tararua and Aorangi Forest Parks. Fees charged for the use of these huts are pooled by the Committee and redistributed for maintenance, upgrading and replacement of huts. The Department is committed to ongoing membership of the Huts Committee.

A core network of facilities enhances the range of recreational opportunities across the Conservancy. This network is based on the following considerations.

- Visitors have a range of skills and experience levels and require facilities appropriate to these.
- Visitors demand a range of facilities, from none, to basic to highly developed.
- Where facilities are needed their standards should be appropriate to each ROS class and the natural and historic resources of the site.

- Present and predicted future levels of use.
- A range of recreation facilities will meet the needs of visitors.

To meet known existing use and predicted levels of use, the Department has identified levels of development and facility standards for key areas within each ROS class.

- *Urban Fringe*: areas characterised by extremely high use and visitors with limited experience, requiring high standard facilities.
- *Rural - Back Country Drive-in*: areas characterised by moderate-high use and visitors with limited experience, requiring high standard facilities.
- *High use Back Country Walk-in*: characterised by moderate - high use and visitors with limited experience, requiring high standard facilities
- *Moderate use Back Country Walk-in*: areas characterised by low - moderate use and visitors with higher experience, requiring basic standard facilities.
- *Remote*: areas characterised by low use and visitors with high to very high skills requiring basic standard or no facilities.

The core hut and campsite network is summarised by ROS areas in the tables below. A full description of existing and proposed facilities is provided in Appendix 3. Huts, tracks and campsites not listed or identified for maintenance will not be maintained by the Department. Clubs may, if they wish, be involved in listed hut, track and other facilities maintenance, and the Department will work with them to ensure this is to the standards specified in this CMS.

The core hut network includes 28 existing Category 3 huts with an additional hut proposed for Pakihore Ridge. There are five Category 2 huts with two new huts proposed for Table Top and Marchant Ridge and Atiwhakatu hut will be replaced in a new location. In addition to the existing eight bookable huts, five more are proposed for the Orongorongo Valley where visitor use and demand for family type accommodation is high. This would provide a core hut network (not including shelters) of 50 huts in the Back Country and Remote areas of the Conservancy.

Six huts (Burn, Blue Range, Sayers, Harris Creek, Neill Forks, Cattle Ridge and Ngapotiki) will receive club maintenance only. If the clubs choose not to maintain these huts they will be removed if they become unsafe. Five huts (Dorset, Arete Forks, Dundas, Mountain House and the existing Atiwhakatu) will receive no maintenance and will be removed if they become unsafe. Nine Bivvies (Arete, Aokaparangi, Dracophyllum, Elder, Hankura, McGregor, Mid King, North Mangahao, and Oriwa) will be maintained only while required for wild animal control work and will be removed if they become unsafe. Four Category 4 huts (Smiths Creek, North Ohau, Edwards and Waitotauru) which are derelict (or vandalised) will be removed and not replaced.

The core campsites include seven existing self-registration sites at roadends. There are an additional eight campsites proposed, five in the Rural-Back Country Drive-in and one in each of the other ROS zones listed below.

The following summary highlights the recreation management intentions for the main ROS classes identified above.

- *Urban Fringe*

Only three sites in the Conservancy are in this ROS class: Colonial Knob [refer Section 6.2, p 57] and Hemi Matenga Scenic Reserves [refer Section 7.3, p 84] and Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve [refer Section 7.4, p 86]. These are extremely popular walking areas and will continue to be managed as high use sites for day visitors. The Department will investigate extending the track system in Hemi Matenga and a proposal to create a Regional Park, including Colonial Knob, Porirua Scenic Reserve and Whitireia Park in partnership with the Wellington Regional Council and Porirua City Council.

The Department will manage these areas to provide opportunities for visitors to gain relatively easy access to outdoor recreation settings close to the main urban centres.

- *Rural - Back Country Drive-in*

The main areas associated with these ROS classes are found along the fringes of the forest parks. These areas have easy vehicle access and attract very high use from both day and overnight visitors. Several areas adjacent to the Wairarapa Wetlands and Paraparaumu Scenic Reserve have, with careful development, the potential to become very popular outdoor destinations.

The Department will manage Rural and Back Country Drive-in areas to provide relatively uncrowded and natural settings. Facilities in these areas will help enhance visits by reducing the number of visitor contacts.

Table 15:

Rural-Back Country Drive-in Core Huts and Campsites

Area	Core Huts and Campsites
Otaki Forks	Parawai Lodge (3), Otaki Forks Campsite
Holdsworth	Holdsworth Lodge (B), Holdsworth Campsite
Waikawa	Waikawa Campsite
Kiriwhakapapa	Kiriwhakapapa Campsite
Waiohine Gorge	Waiohine Campsite
Putangirua	Pinnacles Campsite
Aorangi	Waikuku Lodge (B), Te Kopi Cabins (B)
Catchpool	Catchpool Campsite
Corner Creek	Corner Creek Campsite (proposed)
Lake Wairarapa	Eastern Lake Campsite Western Lake Campsite (proposed)
Rimutaka Incline	Incline Campsite (proposed)
Paraparaumu Scenic Reserve	Paraparaumu Campsite (proposed)
	Total Existing Huts 4
	Total Existing Campsites 7
	Total Proposed Campsites 5

The key sites – Holdsworth Lodge, Lower Waiohine Gorge, Otaki Forks, Catchpool Valley [refer Section 8, p 95] and Putangirua Pinnacles [refer Section 5.6, p 44] – will be managed to provide for extremely high visitor numbers. Tracks and facilities will be developed in Paraparaumu Scenic Reserve [refer Section 7.2, p 82] for day visitors, while the Department will investigate and implement, where feasible, similar facilities and wildlife viewing opportunities around the Wairarapa Wetlands [refer Section 5.2, p 29]. Camping opportunities may also be provided at the latter two sites if demand warrants this.

Other important sites in these classes are Lake Papaitonga, Castlepoint and Makara Walkway. These areas will continue to be managed as high use sites, with facilities provided to protect the natural features from visitor impacts. [refer Sections 5.4, p 38; 6.3, p 59; 7.5, p 89; and Table 15, p 238]

Increasing use has put pressure on these sites and many areas require facilities to be upgraded or replaced to protect visitor safety and the recreation, natural and historic features of the area.

- *High Use Back Country Walk-in*

The high-use Back Country Walk-in areas are those associated with easy vehicle access, well developed tracks or low altitude valley tramping routes. They are found mostly in the eastern valleys of the Tararua Range, the lower Otaki catchment and the southern Rimutaka Range. Kapiti Island also falls within this category.

The tracks in these forest parks have traditionally followed a ridge or valley floor and provided direct access to the interior. Few tracks provided loop walks back to the start point.

The Department will manage the High Use Back Country Walk-In areas to provide an isolated and challenging setting for visitors with only limited backcountry (tramping) experience. The tracks will generally be maintained to tramp standard to take a high number of visitors, while huts will be large (20-45 people) and spaced approximately a half day walk apart. Where necessary, Category 2 huts will be provided to protect the local environment.

Table 16:

High Use Back Country Walk-in Core Huts and Campsites

Area	Core Huts and Campsites
Holdsworth - Kaitoke	Totara Flats hut (2), Tutuwai hut, (2) Cone hut (3 Historic)
Holdsworth - Jumbo	Powell hut (2), Jumbo hut (2)
Holdsworth - Mitre Flats	Atiwhakatu hut (2 relocated), Mitre Flats hut (2)
Field Track	Field Hut (3 Historic), Penn Creek hut (3), Table Top hut (2 proposed)
Orongorongo Valley	Shamrock hut (B), Haurangi hut (B), Jans hut (B), Oaks hut (B), Raukawa Lodge (B), Additional 5 Booked huts proposed and self registration camp site
	Total Existing Huts 13 (14)
	Total Proposed Huts 5
	Total Proposed Campsites 1

The Department will continue to encourage high use in the lower Waingawa, Atiwhakatu, lower Waiohine and Tauherenikau valleys, Field Track, Ohau Track and on the Powell-Jumbo Circuit in Tararua Forest Park and in the Catchpool-Orongorongo Valleys, the Rimutaka Incline and Turakirae area of Rimutaka Forest Park by providing high standard facilities for visitors with limited back country experience. [refer Section 8, p 95; Table 16, p 239; and Appendix 3]

- *Moderate-Low Use Back Country Walk-in*

The moderate to low use areas in this ROS class have developed where access has often been restricted by private landowners, poor roads or the rugged terrain. These areas are generally found in northern catchments of the Tararua, the eastern Rimutaka and Aorangi Ranges. The alpine section of the Southern Crossing route is also in this category.

The Department will manage the Moderate to Low Use Back Country Walk-In areas as a challenging experience for visitors with a moderate level of fitness, experience and self reliance. These areas will be kept as near to Remote in experience as is possible where tracks and huts are provided. To maintain the less crowded nature of these areas tracks will generally be tramping and route standard with Category 3 huts (maximum 20 people) 4-6 hours apart. Category 2 huts will only be considered where unacceptable levels of environmental impact warrant the provision of extra services to protect the environment.

The Department will continue to manage the following areas: lower Mangahao – Ohau – Waiiopehu, Putara – Ruamahanga – Cattle Ridge – Upper Waingawa, Waitewaewae, Upper Waiotauru, Renata Ridge, Table Top – Marchant (Southern Crossing) in Tararua Forest Park, Aorangi Forest Park and central Rimutaka Forest Park. [refer Section 8, p 95; and Table 17, below]

Table 17:

Moderate-Low Use Back Country Walk-in Core Huts and Campsites

Area	Core Huts and Campsites
Ruamahanga - Waingawa	Herepai hut (3), Roaring Stag Lodge (3), Cow Creek hut (3)
Ohau	Waiiopehu hut (3), Te Matawai hut (3), S. Ohau hut (3)
Mid Otaki	Waitewaewae hut (3)
Kapakapanui	Kakapanui hut (3)
Southern Crossing	Kime hut (3), Alpha hut (3), Marchant hut (2 proposed)
Aorangi Forest Park	Tauanui hut (3), Sutherlands hut (3), Washpool hut (3), Parakai hut (3), Kawakawa hut (3), Mangatoetoe hut (3)
Tokomaru	Tokomaru Campsite (proposed)
	Total Existing Huts 16
	Total Proposed Huts 1
	Total Proposed Campsites 1

- *Remote*

The central Tararua Range and the headwaters of the Hutt River are the only areas of Remote class land in the Conservancy. Use of the central Tararua Range has traditionally been restricted to self-reliant visitors with a high degree of back country experience, while public access to the Wellington water supply catchment areas (headwaters of the Hutt River catchment) has not been permitted.

The Department will manage its areas to provide a very challenging and remote experience for visitors with a high degree of skill and self reliance. Tracks in the central Tararua range will generally be maintained at Route standard and lightly marked. Huts will be small (maximum 12 people) and will provide only basic facilities. To reduce the overall impact of tracks and huts on the environment and visitor experiences only key arterial routes will be maintained and huts will be located about 6-8 hours walk apart.

Helicopter access is permitted [*refer Appendix 5*] and encouraged for recreational hunting only.

The Department will continue to manage Neill Ridge – Hector River – mid- to upper- Waiohine River – Tarn Ridge – Arete Forks – Cattle Ridge – Upper Mangahao, Upper Otaki – East Waitewaewae Rivers, mid-Otaki River – Southern Main Range as a low use Remote zone and will advocate for public access to the headwaters of the Hutt River, the only other area of Remote land in the Conservancy.

[*refer Section 8, p 95; and Table 18, below*]

Table 18:

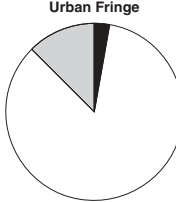
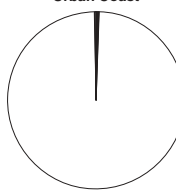
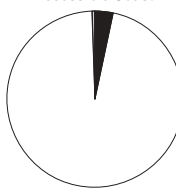
Remote Core Huts and Campsites

Area	Core Huts and Campsites
Mangahao	Mangahao Flats hut (3)
Southern Main Range	Maungahuka hut (3), Anderson hut (3), Pakihore hut (3 proposed), Nichols hut (3 relocation proposed)
Northern Crossing	Tarn Ridge hut (3)
Central Tararua Range	Mid-Waiohine hut (3), Carkeek Ridge hut (3)
Rimutaka Coast	Mukamukaiti Campsite (proposed)
	Total Existing Huts 6 (7)
	Total Existing Proposed Huts 1
	Total Proposed Campsites 1

Implementation

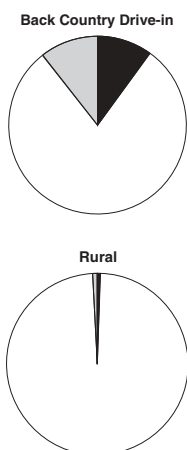
- 1 Where required, prepare site plans, providing for recreation facilities based on the identified levels of development and facility standards for key places and implement these as resources allow. [*refer Appendix 3*]
- 2 Prepare hut, track and facilities maintenance plans which specify standards, capacities and estimated maintenance commitments.
- 3 Continue to manage back country huts in liaison with Tararua-Aorangi Huts Committee. [*refer Section 8, p 95*]
- 4 As resources allow, upgrade, replace and maintain core huts and tracks at standards set for the type and degree of use anticipated. [*refer Appendix 3*]

Table 19:
Examples of places in each Recreation Opportunity Spectrum class

Access Characteristics	Easy access; more people and easier grade tracks		
Facility Characteristics	URBAN URBAN COAST	URBAN FRINGE	RURAL ACCESSIBLE COAST
Very high standard facilities, paths and walking tracks, picnic areas etc.	Wellington and Porirua Harbours Northern Walk (WCC) Southern Walk (WCC) Eastern Walk (WCC) Town Belt (WCC) Local authority parks and reserves	Eastern Hutt Hills (THCC) Eastbourne Hills (THCC) Belmont Regional Park (WRC) Town Green Belt (WCC) Cannon Point WW (WRC)	Queen Elizabeth Park (WRC) Belmont Regional Park (WRC)
High standard facilities, walking and tramping tracks, camping areas, huts, baches, picnic areas etc.		Hemi Matenga Scenic Reserve Colonial Knob Walkway Whitireia Park Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve	Makara Walkway Honeycomb Rock Walkway Castlepoint Scenic Reserve Battle Hill Farm Forest (WRC) Wellington South Coast (WCC) East Harbour Coast (THCC)
Basic facilities, tramping tracks and routes, 4X4 roads, and huts			
Very limited development for outdoor recreation. Very few or no facilities.			
	<p>URBAN and URBAN FRINGE opportunities are associated with the city landscapes and smaller centres of Kapiti, Horowhenua and Wairarapa. The urban fringe is predominantly hilly rural land and forms a very important and highly used resource for local residents. Visitors take part in a wide range of activities with visits usually being of short duration. Access to these areas is easy with numerous walking tracks and parking areas for cars.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Urban Fringe</p> </div> <p>The URBAN COAST areas are characterised by the relatively protected beaches and bays of Wellington and Porirua Harbours and the coastal towns of Paekakariki, Paraparaumu and Waikanae. These areas are considered to be the most important recreation opportunities in the conservancy, attracting extremely high use from both local residents and visitors. There are no urban water opportunities east of Wellington Harbour.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Urban Coast</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Accessible Coast</p> </div> </div>		<p>RURAL opportunities cover about 60% of the conservancy and are characterised by the low rolling hills of Kapiti-Horowhenua districts bordered by the Tararua Range to the east, the expansive grasslands of the Wairarapa plains and the rugged dry coastal hill range of eastern Wairarapa. Very little (2.5%) rural land is in public ownership. The most significant areas are the Wairarapa lakes and wetlands, Lakes Horowhenua, Papatonga, and the farmland of Belmont Regional Park.</p> <p>ACCESSIBLE COAST is characterised by the steep rugged coastal escarpments of eastern Wairarapa, Palliser Bay, Wellington South Coast, and the west coast north to Paekakariki. North of Paekakariki the seascape changes to one of long sweeping beaches and is classified as ACCESSIBLE COAST where there is no direct influence from urban areas. The major factor identifying this class in Wellington conservancy is the relative ease with which visitors gain access by vehicle (car, bike, boat) and foot to areas outside the urban coastal environment.</p>
	<p>The pie charts indicate relative land holdings within each ROS class.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: black; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Department of Conservation <div style="width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px; margin-left: 10px;"></div> Private <div style="width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #cccccc; margin-right: 5px; margin-left: 10px;"></div> Territorial Authorities </div>		

		Difficult access; fewer people and difficult tracks (if any)	
BACK COUNTRY DRIVE-IN	BACK COUNTRY WALK-IN REMOTE COAST	REMOTE	
National Wildlife Centre (Mt Bruce)			
Belmont Regional Park (WRC)			
TFP Otaki Forks Waiohine Gorge Holdsworth Kiriwhakapapa	TFP Atiwhakatu Valley Powell-Jumbo Track		
RFP Catchpool Cross Creek	RFP Lower Orongorongo Valley		
Putangirua Pinnacles Scenic Reserve			
Kaitoke Regional Park (WRC)	Mangaone Walkway		
Tunnel Gully (WRC)			
Pakuratahi Forest (WRC)			
RFP Ocean Beach	TFP Mangahao, Ohau, Waingawa, Tauherenikau, Lower Waiohine, Otaki valleys and Southern Crossing Track.	TFP Main Tararua Range and headwaters of major rivers	
AFP Turanganui Valley			
Turakirae Head Scientific Reserve	Kapiti and Mana Islands		
Akatarawa Water Supply Area (WRC)			
South and east Wairarapa coast			
TFP Mangahao Dams Tokomaru Valley Waiotauru Valley	RFP Upper Orongorongo Valley TFP Tokomaru Valley Waiotauru Valley	Hutt River Water Supply Area (WRC)	
Tora Scenic Reserve	Aorangi Forest Park Waewaepa Scenic Reserve Puketoi Scenic Reserve		
	Water Supply Area (WRC)		

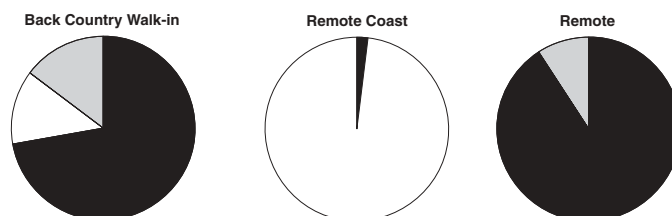
The BACK COUNTRY DRIVE-IN classes cover approximately 17% of the conservancy. They are characterised by the hilly and mountainous terrain of northern and eastern Wairarapa and the foothills of the forest parks. These areas have been extensively farmed or planted in exotic pines or milled and are mostly privately owned. BACK COUNTRY DRIVE-IN has been divided into two sub-classes based primarily on the type of access provided in the area. The degree of naturalness also defines the setting: either predominantly modified (of rural character) or unmodified (more natural in character).



The BACK COUNTRY WALK-IN and REMOTE areas are found in the Tararua, Rimutaka, and Aorangi Ranges. These areas cover about 16% of the conservancy. The terrain of the ranges is rugged, the country is broken with steep-sided valleys, bush-clad up to the alpine grasslands above 1100 m. Rimutaka and Aorangi Forest Parks are classified as BACK COUNTRY WALK-IN. Visitor access is concentrated at a few roadend areas and along tracks across private land bordering the parks. There is a limited track and public hut network in both parks. Intensive use is made of fringe areas at roadends in the Orongorongo Valley which provides a unique opportunity, with over 60 private huts and easy walking access. The Tararua Range is a more complex area of BACK COUNTRY and REMOTE classes. There is a well developed hut and track network, and many road access points to the southwest and east of the park. Very high use is made of the fringe areas at the three major roadend sites (Otaki Forks, Waiohine Gorge, Holdsworth).

There are two areas of REMOTE land in the central Tararua Range. These are both surrounded by BACK COUNTRY WALK-IN which creates a natural buffer of at least one full day's tramp into the REMOTE country. There is a limited track and route system and some huts provide basic accommodation in the alpine areas. Use of the REMOTE areas is high by national standards, and their close proximity to a large population increases their value as recreation resources.

The REMOTE COAST opportunities are all found as small pockets within the longer coastal strips of ACCESSIBLE COAST. These areas, like the ACCESSIBLE coast, are characterised by the rugged escarpments of eastern Wairarapa, Palliser Bay and the Wellington south coast. There is also an area of REMOTE COAST on the west side of Kapiti Island. All these areas, except for Kapiti, are adjacent to a landscape predominantly rural in character.



- 5 Seek further involvement from clubs and organisations to maintain tracks, walkways, campgrounds and other recreation facilities in areas managed by the Department.
- 6 The Department will not maintain, and will remove if unsafe, facilities identified for removal in Appendix 3 and other facilities in consultation with user groups, the Wellington Conservation Board and the general public, and will inform the public of these actions and the rationale behind them.
- 7 Maintain a volunteer hut warden programme.
- 8 Continue to collect hut fees in accordance with the national charging system.

27.3 ACCESS, WALKWAYS AND WALKING OPPORTUNITIES

Explanation

Freedom of entry to areas managed by the Department is considered a public right and is safeguarded in the Conservation Act 1987 and Reserves Act 1977. However to protect natural and historic resources, these Acts do provide for restrictions on public access. The Department encourages public visits and provides road and foot access to facilitate use and enjoyment.

The New Zealand Walkways Act 1990 provides a legal framework for gaining access over land of various tenures. However, some areas managed by the Department are surrounded by private land without easy access by public road and in these areas visitor access may be restricted. The Department will be seeking to negotiate public access in these instances.

Wellington Conservancy

Access to areas in the Conservancy managed by the Department is generally considered adequate. But as the population structure changes, new activities are invented, and as “green consumerism” encourages people outdoors, demand for access continues to increase, especially to the most popular settings – rivers and lakes, bush and the coast.

There are five walkways in the Conservancy which provide access across private and public land. The Department administers four: Colonial Knob [*refer Section 6.2, p 57*], Mangaone, Makara [*refer Section 6.3, p 59*] and Honeycomb Rock. Several more walkways have been proposed by visitor groups, individuals and the Wellington Conservation Board.

There are twelve Walking Opportunities in the Wairarapa; these are walks on private land, where access has been negotiated with the landowner, outside the formal Walkways Act system. Permission must be obtained from landowners before visiting these walks.

Management Issues

Walkways and Walking Opportunities

Demand for walking access over private land appears to be rising. However, the costs associated with establishing walkways are high and the Department’s resources are stretched just maintaining the existing track system. Walking Opportunities are seen as a more cost-effective way of expanding the walking network. The Wellington Conservancy areas where Walking Opportunities would provide the greatest good are close to urban centres (especially close to Palmerston North) and in the seasonally popular holiday areas. In consultation with visitor interest groups and landowners, the Department will identify further walking opportunities and seek to develop these for public use.

Coastal Access

The Conservancy has about 480 km of coastline providing a diverse range of recreation settings. The Department manages only a very small proportion of these settings. There is legal access to more than 75% of the coast, though most visiting is concentrated along areas visitors can drive to. Recreational use in some areas is causing impacts on the resource and conflict between visitors and land owners. A proposal that local government and the Department establish a “Coastal Trail” will create a unique asset for the region, enhancing access, environmental education, employment and tourism.

Objectives

- 1 Maintain public access to areas managed by the Department, free of charge.
- 2 Improve public access to areas managed by the Department.
- 3 Improve public walking opportunities in the Conservancy.
- 4 Advocate for public access to rivers, lakes, the coast and other public lands where it does not already exist.

Implementation

- 1 Advocate for public access to be provided to rivers, lakes and the coast under the provisions of the Resource Management Act 1991, and to other public land, in particular water catchment areas.
- 2 Advocate that no unformed legal road which may provide access to waterways, the coast, areas managed by the Department or other areas providing outdoor recreation opportunities be stopped, or that the public’s right to walk over that road be restricted, except where:
 - there is adequate alternative legal access or
 - stopping the unformed legal road contributes significantly to the protection of natural and historic resources.
- 3 Enhance access to key locations on lands administered by the Department by way of easements, right-of-ways and other legally enforceable agreements.
- 4 Maintain the following vehicle roads and associated carparks for recreation access: Otaki Forks, Waiohine Gorge, Holdsworth, Catchpool, Kaitoke, Underhill Road, Mikimiki Road, North Manakau Road, Putangirua Pinnacles Road, Orongorongo River (4x4 only), and Turakirae carpark.
- 5 Signpost the rights and obligations of visitors using legal access-ways which cross private land to areas managed by the Department and on all walking opportunities negotiated by the Department.
- 6 Maintain the existing walkways and contribute to the Walking Opportunities network.
- 7 Encourage local authorities and other land owners to provide further Walking Opportunities on private rural land and the development of Walkways consistent with section 3 of the New Zealand Walkways Act 1990 and the New Zealand Walkways Policy (April 1993).
- 8 Assist local government in developing the “Coastal Trail” as staffing and financial constraints allow.
- 9 Advocate that local government maintain legal formed roads important for access to areas managed by the Department.

- 10 Inform the public of the range of walking opportunities available.
- 11 The Department will consult with Transit NZ to ensure that safe vehicle access and parking are provided to areas managed by the Department adjacent to state highways.
- 12 Provide access for disabled visitors to areas with suitable terrain where they would normally be able to visit by car, and in particular, the National Wildlife Centre, Otaki Forks, Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve, Papaitonga Scenic Reserve, Carter Scenic Reserve and Catchpool Valley.

27.4 MANAGING RECREATIONAL IMPACTS

Explanation

Recreational use and facilities can cause impacts on natural and historic resources and recreation activities. In addition to the conflicts between protection and recreation, conflicts can occur when recreation use grows to a point where the experience gained changes in character. The term Recreation Carrying Capacity is used to describe the level of use beyond which impacts cause a change to the setting [*refer Section 27.1, p 233*]. For each setting there are different components to carrying capacities:

- *Environmental*: The natural features. Visitors and facilities can cause impacts or changes to the natural features of the setting.
- *Social*: The interactions between visitors. The presence of other visitors can impact on the experience, such phenomena as crowding can reduce enjoyment and change the recreation experience.
- *Facility*: The tracks, huts, campgrounds and picnic areas. Overuse and crowding can damage or impact on facilities.

Most recreation facilities and use discussed in this CMS already exist. It is important, therefore, to monitor and ameliorate the impacts resulting from existing facilities and use.

Management Issues

Protecting the Environment

Environmental impacts created by visitors are usually very site specific and localised. However the cumulative effect around sensitive sites or areas (e.g., wetlands and alpine grasslands) can cause irreparable damage and sometimes loss of the special features of the site. Where this loss is imminent or other environmental features are seriously threatened it is necessary to take remedial action. This may involve: educating visitors as to their effects to improve their behaviour, restricting use or hardening a site, or closing an area and directing visitors to other sites. Where use is well established it is often impractical to stop or restrict and it is then that the site is hardened or upgraded or use of an alternative site is encouraged. This is always a compromise because it may lead to increased use and/or loss of recreational experience. It will become increasingly important to establish indicators of resource conditions mutually agreed by the public and the Department to ensure protection of both the environment and the recreation experience.

Where the Department proposes to construct new facilities, it will undertake or commission an environmental impact assessment of the effects of the facilities and may consult with interested public groups.

Maintaining Experience

The management of visitor impacts has traditionally involved the progressive hardening of sites (improved or more facilities) as they show

signs of wear and tear. This usually increases visitor comfort and safety, and as a result encourages more recreational use, and the ROS class may change.

The management experience gained from other areas shows that continued and increasing levels of use lead to changes in the character of the setting. Changes to the conditions first encountered by visitors tends to dilute their satisfaction and “pushes” them to seek new opportunities to recapture their previous experiences. The gaps left by departing visitors are filled by others for whom the existing opportunities are acceptable.

To maintain the range of opportunities and reduce the incremental crawl towards a uniform recreation experience, it is necessary to set “evaluative standards” which can be monitored to measure whether recreation objectives are being met. These are the acceptable limits to change. Management objectives will therefore specify appropriate environmental and social conditions for a range of recreation opportunities.

Objectives

- 1 To manage recreation impacts to protect the environment and maintain the quality and range of Recreation Opportunities on areas managed by the Department.

Implementation

- 1 Develop, in consultation with those who have an interest, indicators of resource (environmental, social, facility) conditions for each ROS class or for specific sites that will guide management in maintaining each Recreation Opportunity and protecting the natural environment.
- 2 Monitor natural resource, social and facility conditions to ensure the mix of Recreation Opportunities are maintained at the identified standards, and that natural and historic resources are not threatened.
- 3 Manage impacts or change to maintain the mix of Recreation Opportunities and protect conservation values.
- 4 Undertake or commission an environmental impact assessment for new facilities or other recreation activities on areas managed by the Department.
- 5 The Department will consult with those who have an interest in recreation facilities, and the effects of their development or use on the land it manages.

27.4.1 Activities

Explanation

Areas managed by the Department offer opportunities to pursue a wide range of recreation activities. Some are complementary to conservation, some have impacts that are not acceptable and some are desirable but have associated impacts that are tolerable only to a limited degree.

For most activities, constraints apply because of their possible conflict with conservation and recreation objectives. When assessing the appropriateness of activities, the following criteria apply:

The activity will not:

- Be in conflict with the conservation management objectives for the area.
- Degrade the recreation experience of other visitors.
- Be incompatible with the natural and historic values of the area.
- Conflict with the values of tangata whenua.

*Dogs***Management Issues**

Many visitors bring dogs onto areas managed by the Department for hunting, as companions and as guides. Dogs can, however, impact on wildlife and other visitors' enjoyment if not kept under control – meaning on a lead at all times. The Department's approach is to allow for guide dogs and other dogs where they do not conflict with other visitors or natural and historic resources.

Implementation

- 1 Prohibit or control dogs (except for guide dogs and those used for management purposes, e.g., animal pest control, threatened species management, and search and rescue) in the following areas where they pose a threat to wildlife or have the potential to conflict with other visitors. Areas where by-laws and regulations will be sought to prohibit dogs are:

- National Wildlife Centre, Mount Bruce.
- Kapiti Island Nature Reserve.
- Mana Island Scientific Reserve.
- Rimutaka Forest Park, in the following areas:
 - Catchpool Valley – dogs to be excluded from the following areas:
 - The picnic areas adjacent to the Catchpool Valley road upstream of the vehicle ford.
 - The camping areas adjacent to Catchpool Stream.
 - Landcare Research Station, formally DSIR Field Station, Orongorongo Valley.
- Turakirae Head Scientific Reserve
- Sinclair Head Scientific Reserve
- Lake Onoke Spit: dogs to be excluded during the caspian tern and banded dotterel breeding season, August to March inclusive.

Areas where by-laws and regulations will be sought to control dogs by requiring they be on a leash at all times:

- Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve
- Pukerua Bay Scientific Reserve
- Papaitonga Scenic Reserve
- Paraparaumu Scenic Reserve
- Red Rocks Scientific Reserve
- Hemi Matenga Memorial Scenic Reserve
- Tararua Forest Park, in the following areas:
 - Otaki Forks Road-end
 - Holdsworth Road-end
 - Waiohine Gorge Road-end
- Rimutaka Forest Park, in the following areas:
 - Area adjacent to Catchpool Valley roadend
 - Along Orongorongo, Middle Ridge and Five Mile Loop tracks.

- 2 Indicate on signs, permits, recreation publications and maps where dogs may not be taken, and the conditions controlling their presence where they are allowed.
- 3 Advocate to local government to prohibit dogs at sites with high wildlife values.

Horses and Motorised Off-Road Vehicles

Management Issues

Most land suitable for Motorised Off-Road Vehicles (MORVs) and horses is in private ownership. Wellington Regional Council and the Department manage all of the Back Country land in public ownership which could be used by MORVs. There is continuing pressure for vehicle and horse access to be allowed in areas managed by the Department, especially where there are old logging roads.

MORVs and horses cause considerable damage and can conflict with other visitors. The Department will therefore allow access for these activities only where impacts can be minimised. This will restrict use to certain formed roads and old logging tracks on the periphery of the forest parks. All MORV use on 4-wheel-drive roads will require a permit from the Department.

Implementation

- 1 Allow horses on formed roads and old logging tracks listed in Appendix 3.
- 2 Allow MORVs by permit only on formed roads and old logging trails listed in Appendix 3.
- 3 The Department will not maintain these roads and old logging trails for horses and MORVs but will encourage and allow groups to do this for their own benefit to standards set by the Department.
- 4 Impose limits on the number of permits and/or vehicles where monitoring and/or visitor surveys indicate the presence of MORVs is creating an unacceptable impact on the recreational experience of visitors or the natural and historic features of the area.
- 5 Limit private MORV use of the Orongorongo Valley road for bach maintenance and for special events requiring a permit or concession [refer Section 26.1, p 215].
- 6 In consultation with interested public groups, identify areas suitable for MORV and horse access.
Advocate for continued access to Wellington Regional Council lands suitable for these activities and other land (farm, plantation, etc.) where appropriate.

Mountain Bikes

Management Issues

Mountain biking is a rapidly growing activity in the Conservancy. There is considerable demand for off-road biking opportunities, but some conflict has occurred with walkers.

Mountain biking can cause damage to foot tracks and can impact on other natural features. This is especially so where riders are not cautious and don't control their speed. Mountain bikers, like walkers, seek a range of terrain, however off-road riding usually requires relatively smooth tracks, which are often the high use walking tracks. The tracks/roads where mountain biking is permitted are listed in Appendix 3. The Department will, in consultation with the public, identify further areas where mountain biking will be permitted.

Implementation

- 1 Allow mountain biking on the tracks and roads listed in Appendix 3.
- 2 In consultation with interested public groups, identify other tracks suitable for mountain biking using the following criteria:
 - The physical impact of mountain bikes will not accelerate erosion or other damage to the track surface.
 - Visitor numbers using the track or road are low *or* bikes and walkers can be accommodated on the same track.
- 3 Promote selected tracks and roads for mountain biking; identify tracks where mountain biking will not be allowed and deter riders from them, and undertake a public awareness campaign on mountain bike routes.
- 4 Indicate at road and track ends whether mountain biking is permitted.
- 5 Advocate for continued access to other public lands suitable for mountain biking, and encourage mountain biking clubs to participate in maintaining those tracks and logging roads which they use.

*Helicopters***Management
Issues**

The presence of helicopters and their passengers can change the perception other visitors have of the area, reducing the feeling of remoteness. It is becoming necessary to limit recreational helicopter use in some areas to protect the recreation experience of others. Helicopter access has improved recreational hunting access, and where this assists the Department with its wild animal control work it will be allowed [refer Section 20, p 183].

Commercial recreational use of helicopters is controlled by permit and concession agreements [refer Section 26, p. 215]. Other use (e.g., WRC servicing rain gauge sites) is regulated by permit. The Department has a monitoring and visitor survey programme to determine the impact the presence of helicopters has on the recreational experience of visitors.

The range of possible impacts associated with helicopter use includes noise, increased visitor numbers and crowding, rubbish, proliferation of campsites, vegetation clearance for firewood and the effect of hunter effort on deer populations in remote areas.

Where monitoring of recreational use of helicopters indicates unacceptable impacts on the environment and/or the experience of other visitors, it may be necessary to set limits to the number of flights and/or times when recreational helicopters will be allowed to fly.

Implementation

- 1 Allow helicopter access for the maintenance of recreation facilities by the Department, search and rescue operations, and other essential recreational management.
- 2 Impose flight path and/or number of landing restrictions where monitoring and visitor surveys indicate the use of helicopters for recreation purposes is creating an unacceptable impact on the environment and/or recreational experience of visitors. [See also Section 27.4, p 246]
- 3 Allow helicopter landings for recreational purposes by non-concessioned operators by permit only at the designated landing sites in Tararua and Rimutaka Forest Parks [refer ROS Map facing p 240].
Applications for permits will be assessed taking into account the following:

- i It is not a commercial event or activity which would usually require a concession, e.g., it is not a commercially guided walk or sporting event.
 - ii There are no more than 5 landings on any one day at each site (a maximum number of landings per week may be set by the Department).
 - iii Landings will normally be restricted to week days (Monday - Friday).
 - iv The associated visitor activity is appropriate on nearby tracks and in the area covered by the permit.
- 4 The Department will consider allowing operators to hold a concession with restricted landing rights at the designated landing sites on a trial basis. All applications will be assessed using the criteria (ii-iv) listed above and the associated impacts of noise, increased visitor numbers and effects on the environment.

Recreational Hunting

Management Issues

Recreational hunting is a popular pursuit in the Wellington area, and there is considerable opportunity for deer, pig and goat hunting in the forest parks. Aorangi Forest Park has been managed as a Recreational Hunting Area (RHA) for many years. The value of recreational hunting to animal pest control appears to be one of maintaining rather than reducing population numbers and it may benefit the health of the herd more than the habitat. The level of animal control from recreational hunting does not make it the only or most effective deer control tool. For this reason recreational hunting is seen as a recreation opportunity that will be encouraged but which will not preclude other animal pest management techniques.

[Refer Section 20, p 183]

Objectives

- 1 Encourage recreational hunting on areas managed by the Department for its recreational benefit in addition to its contribution to the conservation of natural resources.

Implementation

- 1 Provide information on hunting opportunities.
- 2 In consultation with interested user groups and after completing environmental impact assessments, provide tracks and huts compatible with the protection of natural and historic resources where this will facilitate hunting in priority areas for animal pest control *[Refer Section 20 and Appendix 3]*.
- 3 Allow hunting by permit only.
- 4 Allow helicopter access to the Remote zone and eastern Rimutaka Forest Park. *[refer Section 20, p 183; and Section 27.4.1 Helicopters, p 250]*

Game Bird Hunting

Management Issues

The Department shares responsibility for the management of several wetland areas in the Wairarapa which are important habitat remnants. They are also prime game bird habitat and popular hunting areas during the shooting season. *[refer Section 5.2, p 29]*

Game bird hunting is licensed and managed and hunting stands are allocated by the Wellington Fish and Game Council at the Lake Wairarapa Wetlands, while the Department controls uses of land and access to the wetlands.

Implementation

- 1 Allow game bird hunting on areas managed by the Department by issuing hunting permits in accordance with the appropriate legislation.
- 2 Prohibit the use of mobile hunting stands which destroy the native aquatic turf on conservation land; discourage their use on other land.
- 3 Work with Wellington Fish and Game Council to manage game bird hunting.

27.5 ENVIRONMENTAL CARE CODE

The New Zealand Environmental Care Code was developed by the Department and other organisations as a guideline for visitors and to help protect our natural environment. It covers issues of plants, animals, rubbish, sewage and fire. Consideration of others and respect of our historical and cultural heritage is also promoted.

Management Issues

Rubbish

A carry-in and carry-out your own rubbish policy is promoted to all visitors, and litter bags for rubbish are available. This policy is necessary to protect areas managed by the Department and to reduce the Department resources required to collect and remove rubbish.

Cooking Fuels

Most huts contain open fireplaces or stoves for cooking and heating. In high use huts, gas, wood or coal may be supplied. Where fuel is not supplied visitors are encouraged to use portable cooking equipment and to gather only dead material for fires. The practice of cutting live trees for firewood is not acceptable and will be strongly discouraged.

Sewage and Grey Water Management

With a growing awareness of disease risks caused by organisms such as giardia, and with the increased use of the outdoors leading to greater volumes of effluent, it is important that water quality be protected and in some areas improved. The location, type and standards of toilet influences water quality and the visitors' recreational experience. The Department will carefully evaluate siting and type of toilets appropriate to user levels at any site to protect the environment and visitors' health and sensitivities.

Objectives

- 1 Raise visitors' awareness of their impacts on areas managed by the Department and seek to minimise adverse effects.

Implementation

- 1 A carry-in and carry-out your own rubbish policy will continue to be implemented and promoted on all areas managed by the Department and advocated for other natural areas.
- 2 Existing rubbish holes will be filled in, and rubbish bins will be removed from most sites. Rubbish collection facilities will only be retained in high-use roadend areas where collection can be carried out regularly.
- 3 Visitors will be encouraged to carry their own portable cooking facilities or firewood for use in areas managed by the Department. In high use huts, gas, wood or coal may be supplied.

- 4 Appropriate sewage and grey water disposal will be provided at huts, at roadends, picnic sites, camping sites, and other high use sites. They will be designed and sited to protect waterways.
- 5 Prepare and distribute educational material for visitors and potential visitors about appropriate environmental behaviour when recreating outdoors.

27.6 VISITOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

There is an element of risk in all outdoor recreational activities. While individuals are primarily responsible for their own safety and health, all reasonable precautions will be taken to minimise risks to visitors. To help achieve this, the Department will consult with interested visitors and health and safety groups in the preparation of a plan which will cover the safety procedures for facilities management, search and rescue, Department operations, and information services to reduce risks to public safety.

Objectives

- 1 Endeavour to ensure visitors are aware of hazards and encourage them to take appropriate precautions to minimise the risks.

Implementation

- 1 The Department will, in consultation with the public and interested health and safety groups, prepare a Visitor Risk and Safety Management Plan.
- 2 Visitor health and safety will be promoted by the provision of information and advice about potential problems or dangers.
- 3 The Department will provide potable drinking water or notices to explain that water should be treated at category 2, 3 and bookable huts, at campsites and at major access points.
- 4 The Department will provide sanitary facilities for the collection and disposal of human waste at category 2, 3 and bookable huts, at campsites, at major access points and at other sites where visitor use warrants the provision of toilets. *[See also Section 27.5, p 252 and Section 27.4, p 246]*
- 5 The Department will provide sanitary facilities and/or advice on the disposal of waste water at category 2, 3 and booked huts, at campsites and other areas where visitor use warrants the provision of these facilities *[See also Section 27.5, p 252 and Section 27.4, p 246]*.
- 6 The Department will provide for the safe use of pesticides and other chemicals used in its management operations.
- 7 Facilities will be sited, designed, constructed, and maintained to a safe standard.
- 8 Field staff will be trained in first aid and relevant outdoor skills.
- 9 The Department will continue to assist and co-operate with search and rescue authorities and other authorities having responsibilities for public health and safety.
- 10 Concessionaires' licence documents will make it clear that they are to be responsible for the safety of their clients and the appropriate use of facilities by their clients to protect public health and safety.

27.7 RECREATION INFORMATION

Explanation

Recreation information is provided by the Department to facilitate public access, improve visitor safety, to foster outdoor recreation and to raise awareness about visitor impacts on the environment. This is provided in three main forms: as signs, publications, and through visitor information centres.

Management Issues*Signs*

The Department's approach to signs is to place them to orientate or direct visitors and provide health, safety and environmental care advice at main access points, along tracks and in huts. They are often the first and only contact visitors have with the Department and as such are an important public relations tool. The Department will maintain these to a high standard. The number of signs and problems with vandalism in some locations means signs' maintenance must be an annual financial commitment. The design and location of signs will be sensitive to the landscape character of the site.

Publications

Recreation publications, e.g., Recreation Sheet Series, are provided for key sites and some activities on areas managed by the Department. They are designed to tell visitors where to go, what they can do and what to expect at the site. It is important that they are accurate and suit visitor information needs. Monitoring of client use will help ensure that their needs are being met.

Recreation Information Centres

The Department has visitor information available at the Conservancy office, field centre offices, visitor centres at Catchpool Valley and the National Wildlife Centre, the Wellington Visitor Information Centre and local information centres and retail outlets throughout the Conservancy. The Department's Head Office in Boulcott Street, Wellington, also provides visitors with information on behalf of the Conservancy.

The high visitor numbers to Tararua and Rimutaka Forest Parks and the high number of residents and visitors to the Conservancy means the Department should expand its information centre network.

Potential locations for additional information centres are in the vicinity of Lake Wairarapa Wetlands and on the Kapiti Coast. Visitor numbers at Holdsworth, Otaki Forks and Waiohine Gorge roadends in Tararua Forest Park may justify an expansion of the types of visitor information available at these locations.

The Department will be seeking to establish or locate visitor recreation information centres jointly with other organisations.

Objectives

- 1 Provide quality recreation information for visitors to areas managed by the Department and the community.

Implementation

- 1 Provide signs which conform with national signs standards in areas managed by the Department where levels of use or need for directional or safety information warrants.
- 2 Provide and distribute publications which encourage and inform visitors about recreation opportunities in the Conservancy.

- 3 The Department will liaise regularly with tourism development agencies and work co-operatively with other recreation providers and organisations to provide and distribute recreation publications.
- 4 Investigate, and provide if feasible, a recreation information service at potential sites identified above, either solely established and managed by the Department or in partnership with other recreation and tourism providers.

27.8 RECREATION MONITORING

Management Issues

Visitor Needs and Demands

Our understanding of visitor needs and the changing demand for outdoor recreation opportunities is imprecise and limited. The Conservancy provides an outdoor recreation resource for a resident population over 500,000, and the region hosts 1,350,000 visitors (tourists) a year. To meet all recreation needs we must understand what these are now and what the trends are. It is more effective for planning if studies can be repeated at regular intervals and monitored annually. However, gathering and analysing information is expensive and time consuming.

Changing Recreation Activities

Changing technologies, recreation patterns and visitor interests have seen the development of new pursuits (e.g., mountain bikes, jet skis) and an increase in the number of visitors taking part in outdoor activities. Potential for conflict between visitors following traditional pursuits and new activities is high and the environmental impacts are unknown. The implications of changes in recreation demand are that recreation opportunities will also change. The impacts of these changes can be anticipated and management action formulated to accommodate visitor requirements.

How the Department manages all visitor activities will be an important component of maintaining the balance of Recreation Opportunities and protecting natural and historic resources.

Objectives

- 1 To gather and analyse recreation use information to assist with the management and provision of recreation opportunities on land administered by the Department.

Implementation

- 1 Monitor recreation trends, visitors and participation in activities to assess needs and shifts in recreation demand. Where these changes can be anticipated, management action will be formulated to accommodate visitor requirements.
- 2 Target information gathering to specific purposes, e.g., hut and track management. Within the Conservancy this will be achieved by:
 - Periodic on-site surveys.
 - Periodic activity-specific surveys.
 - Monitoring of visitor numbers at specific sites (tracks, road-ends, visitor centres).
- 3 Co-operate with other recreation providers (primarily local government) in more extensive research, and negotiate appropriate departmental involvement.
- 4 Require recreation concession holders to provide visitor statistics regularly as a condition of their permits and licences.