

5. Land use

The first Europeans cleared much of this area. The forest provided timber for building and the land was wanted for farming but it was unsuitable.

The area has been popular for tramping since the early 1900s. Many huts were built and a 'Shanty-town Store' operated on one of the tracks for a few years before 1935.

By the 1940s, logging of native trees had stopped and much of the land was allowed to regenerate naturally. Some land was planted in exotic forest.



Cleared forest on the Wainuiomata hills.

Arthur Bothamley Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.



Trampers set out along the Orongorongo Track.

Photo: Barry Lissette.



Shamrock Hut.

Photo: David Lewis.

5. Land use

Check out the interpretation panel 'A Rimutaka History' in the Catchpool car park.

During your walk into the Orongorongo Valley keep watch out for evidence of past land use. See if you can find 3 from the list below.

- Kumera pits and hunting tools;
- Wire and posts from old farm fences;
- Tree stumps left from timber milling (in the Tawa Grove, near the park entrance, there is an old winch from a past era of logging. Nearby is the site of the original water-powered saw-mill);

Totara were used to make some of the finest waka/canoes.



- Charred logs or tree stumps from attempts by farmers to control scrub and encourage grass growth;
- Huts and tracks used for recreation and hunting (there are about 60 huts in the Rimutaka Forest Park today);
- Pig and deer, introduced to provide recreational hunting;
- Possums, introduced to provide a fur industry.

If you could go back a hundred years what advice would you have for people about how to use the forest?