

DRAFT

# Kahuterawa Outdoor Recreation Plan



# An Outdoor Recreation Strategy was developed in 2002 to set the direction for the development and management on the Kahuterawa Recreation Area.

**In 2006 Council acquired what is now known as Arapuke Forest Park, then the Woodpecker Forest. The 2008 Kahuterawa Outdoor Recreation Plan updated development and management planning for the Kahuterawa Recreation Area, taking a comprehensive look at direction that would be taken following the harvesting of the exotic pine forest.**

Since that time the Kahuterawa Recreation area has seen significant growth and popularity. This recreation area, and in particular the mountain bike assets, attract visitors to events and day-rides and is a major asset for Palmerston North.

The 2025 Kahuterawa Outdoor Recreation Plan (KORP) follows in the footsteps of the successful 2008 plan. It is 17 years since the 2008 KORP was developed, and it is due for a review.



# Resources, Context and Planning Framework

**A detailed analysis and description of the resources of the area, stakeholder input, and the planning framework was undertaken in the preparation of the 2008 Kahuterawa Outdoor Recreation Plan. A brief summary of this information is provided as follows:**

## Scope of the plan

The plan addresses the management of linked areas and facilities that form part of a Kahuterawa Outdoor Recreation Hub.

Areas and facilities included are:

- Arapuke Forest Park (formerly known as Woodpecker Forest)
- Kahuterawa Reserve
- Gordon Kear Forest
- Hardings Park (Turitea Reserve Management Plan is already present for this area which will be integrated with other areas).
- Back Track
- Sledge Track
- Kahuterawa Road End carpark and associated facilities
- Greens Road (the portion closed to vehicle traffic)
- The carpark within the park, at the end of Scotts Road
- Land between the carpark and the Kahuterawa stream at the Kahuterawa Road end.

The objective is to provide an integrated plan for the management of Council's outdoor recreational assets within the Kahuterawa Valley and related land, to ensure they provide maximum benefit for the community.



# Environment and Resources

**The physical environment of the Kahuterawa Outdoor Recreation Area is varied. Altitude rises from 150m above sea level, at the end of the Kahuterawa Road, to 767m at the summit of Arawaru. Vegetation cover ranges from exotic forests to native scrub and mature native forest. The Kahuterawa Stream forms a central axis flowing through the area.**

There are a range of important resources within the area that need to be considered within the plan. These include:

## Recreation:

The area is already important for outdoor recreation. There is wide use of the Sledge Track and Back Track by walkers and runners. The Te Araroa Trail passes through the area along the Back Track and through Gordon Kear Forest. Arapuke Forest Park forms an important mountain biking resource and has hosted national mountain biking events. Picnicking and swimming are important around the road end area.

## Water:

The Kahuterawa Stream is an important high-quality water resource for native fish species and trout spawning. It also provides high quality water for swimming. It is used for kayaking in flood flows.

## Biodiversity – native plants & animals:

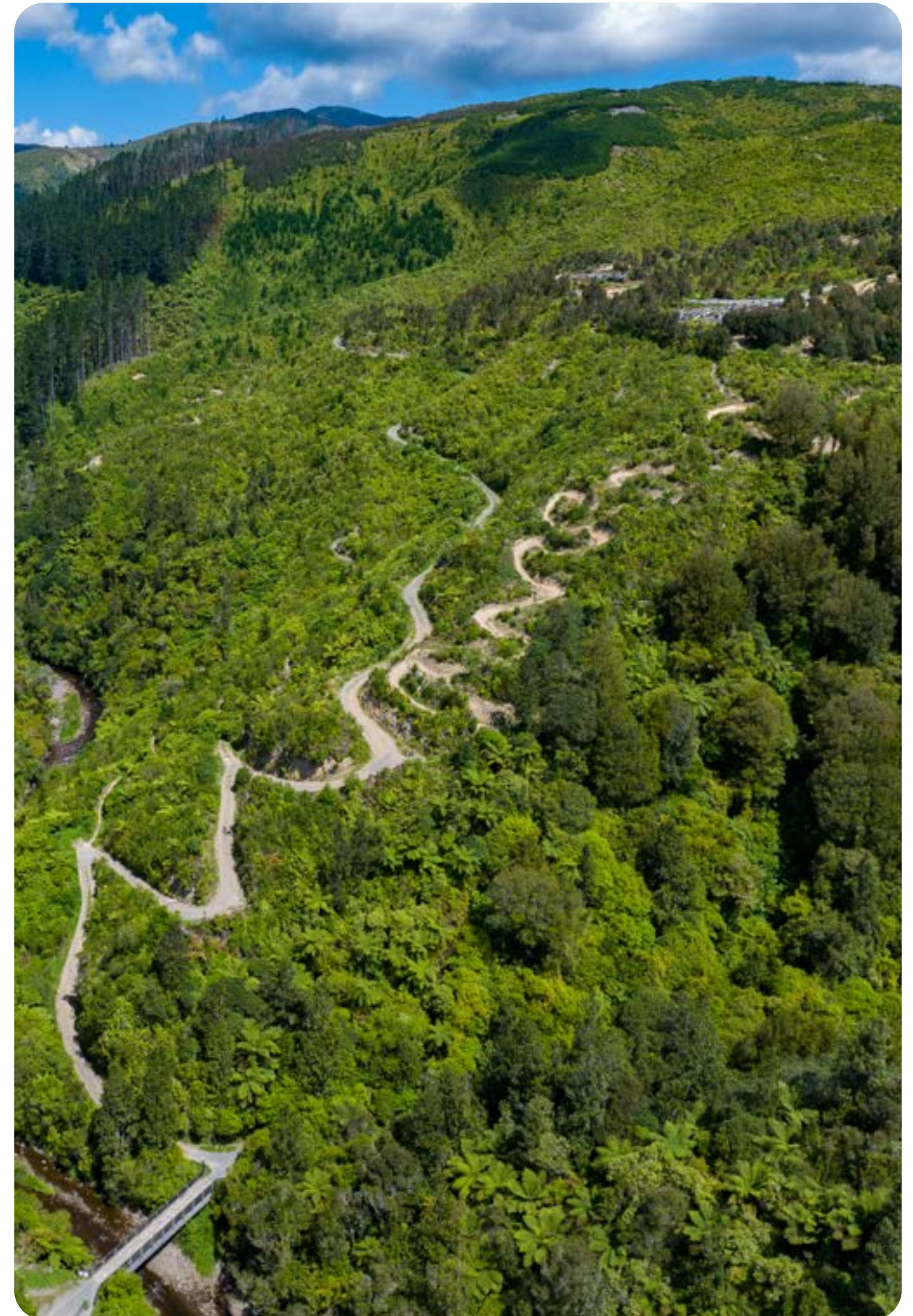
The area has important biodiversity values including regionally important remnant kāmahī forest, a nationally endangered carnivorous land snail, *Powelliphanta traversi tararuaensis*, and a good variety of native bird species including kōwhiri, bellbird, tūī and whitehead.

## Exotic forests:

Important exotic forest resources are presently in their early growth phase. Arapuke Forest Park was harvested in 2014/15. The replanting programme shifted 48 ha out of exotic forest in to a mix of regenerating native forest on the margins of the stream and steeper gullies. The exotics area was planted out in mixed-species planting, including varied pockets of long-lived species to ensure future harvesting was not clear felling of the whole site at one time. This reduced the environmental impacts and impacts on recreation access and use including mountain biking. Other major forests are present in Gordon Kear Forest and forests on private land. Gordon Kear Forest is managed primarily for commercial forestry returns but has some secondary recreational use.

## Landscape:

The area is identified as having a high quality rural and conservation landscape. It connects to large, intact, ecological areas, and the Tararua Range.





# Structure of plan

The plan is divided into Management Areas. The following describe the areas:

- Management Area 1: Management and Administration
- Management Area 2: Rangitāne o Manawātū
- Management Area 3 and 4: Information & Involvement
- Management Area 5: Outdoor Recreation
- Management Area 6: Natural Landscapes & Ecosystems
- Management Area 7: Monitoring

Each Management Area has an explanation of its context; and a set of Policies Council requires to define the effective management of the area. Some Development Opportunities are identified.

This plan should be read in conjunction with the General Policy Reserve Management Plan. The following areas have a cross-over with the General Policy, and links to the relevant section(s) are provided:

- One-off events
- Special Interest Camping
- Nohoanga



| Physical Area       | Status                               | Legal Description                              | Description  |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Arapuke Forest Park | Council owned private land           | CT WN 324/117                                  | Forest 171.6 Ha land area, 130.7 Ha of which is mature radiata pine forest. Located at the end of Kahuterawa Road  |
| Kahuterawa Reserve  | Reserve used for recreation purposes | Lot 1 DP 30200; Lot 2 DP 30200; Lot 4 DP 80726 | 4.9 Ha of Recreation Reserve adjacent to Kahuterawa Road and Kahuterawa Stream.  |
| Back Track          | Legal road                           |  | Formed legal roadway used as recreational track from the end of Kahuterawa Road to Scotts Road.  |
| Sledge Track        | Legal road                           |  | Recreational walking track on legal roadway from end of Kahuterawa Road to Hardings Park.  |
| Hardings Park       | Scenic Reserve                       | Part Sec 2 SO 37039, CT WN 373/131 (pt).       | 828.7 ha of scenic reserve comprising the southern end of Turitea Reserve. Covered by the Turitea Reserve Management Plan  |
| Kahuterawa Road     | Legal road                           |  | The Kahuterawa Road end carpark and associated facilities, but not the road itself.  |
| Greens Road         | Legal road                           |  | The portion of road closed to vehicle traffic and the walkway purchased parallel to a portion of the open road.  |
| Gordon Kear         | Council owned private land.          | CT 242473 and CT WN 225/68                     | Forest 678.1 ha of land and forest jointly owned by PNCC and Manawatu District Council. 414.1 ha is planted in radiata pine forest, of which 60.5 ha is subject to a six year forestry right. Excludes 66.2 ha in CT 242474 which is no longer owned by Council. Gordon Kear Forest is managed for commercial forestry returns but has some secondary recreational use |

# Management and Administration

## 1. Management Policies

The Kahuterawa Outdoor Recreation Area (KORA) is a thriving space thanks to the strong partnership between Council and a variety of community groups. These groups bring their expertise and passion to the area, confidently managing their respective roles and contributing to its ongoing success.

Council supports these efforts through funding in the Long-Term Plan and providing support across diverse activities—such as mountain-biking, volunteer-led track work and improving biodiversity. Council provides clear communication and promotes shared responsibilities at this park. This collaborative approach helps maintain the area as a vibrant and well-managed space for outdoor recreation, while also fostering public engagement and education about its unique features.

**Policy 1.1:** Support and facilitate coordination between groups working to improve the Kahuterawa Outdoor Recreation area for mountain-biking, walking, biodiversity and cultural identity

**Policy 1.2:** Remain updated with information from users, neighbours and volunteers that enable effective management of the KORA.

**Policy 1.3:** Assess (impacts and benefits) and remain open to opportunities and proposals from the community, such as the following:

- Events and activations
- New activities and infrastructural requirements to support them
- Improvement of existing activities and associated infrastructure
- Commercial activities that improve user experience at the KORA
- One-off or short-term activities.



# Rangitāne o Manawatū

Rangitāne have a deep and enduring relationship to the peaks of the Tararua Ranges, which is recalled when speaking to the maunga of their pepeha. The ranges are the key feature that, along with the Manawatu River – which form an integral part of their spiritual and physical identity both as an Iwi and as individuals belonging to an area.

In recent times Council and the Manawatu Mountain Bike Club have worked with Rangitāne to develop a rest area and waharoa that represent the significance of this place and their relationship to it.

The Korp area and ranges are also home to some rare and endangered wildlife species and Rangitāne are kaitiaki in this space. As kaitiaki Rangitāne may be required to impart tikanga to Council staff and volunteers when working amongst the maunga, issue rahui, be part of inductions for staff or volunteers and be involved in key decision-making areas. Induction information may include respectfulness, accidental discovery protocols and care of other species.

## 2.1: Recognition of Rangitāne relationship to the Korp

Although infrastructure developments in this area are rare, opportunities may occasionally arise to incorporate infrastructure that enables cultural expression.

**Policy 2.1.1:** work with Rangitāne to incorporate local design features into appropriate Council infrastructure projects at the Korp.

Some outdoor recreation signage is simply directional or regulatory, while other signage has an interpretive or historical element to it. Council will work with Rangitāne to identify signage where it is appropriate to include a cultural element.

**Policy 2.1.2:** as signage is replaced, work with Rangitāne to incorporate any appropriate cultural information into new signs.

## 2.2 Rangitane Involvement in Decision-Making

As partners with Council Rangitāne there is a strong focus on ensuring decision-making occurs alongside the Council and that appropriate roles (such as kaitiaki) are able to be enacted across a variety of areas.

**Policy 2.2.1:** Council will work with Rangitāne on key decisions regarding walking track development and upgrades and encourage the Manawatu Mountain Bike club to do so for major trail development proposals.

**Policy 2.2.2:** Council will work with Rangitāne on key decisions regarding ecological restoration and the harvesting/planting of forest.

The role of kaitiaki is about ensuring a place is cared for so that all of its inhabitants are respected and able to dwell in their place in balance with nature. This includes people, streams, wildlife, plants, mountains and peaks. If deaths or dangers occur from time-to-time in a place, rahui may be required in order to reset the balance. Sometimes it may be appropriate for some form of tikanga to be imparted to volunteers and Council staff when working amongst the maunga.

**Policy 2.2.3:** Rangitāne will act as kaitiaki of Korp

**Policy 2.2.4:** Rangitāne may issue rahui when required

**Policy 2.2.5:** Rangitāne may provide tikanga to Council staff and volunteers as required for inductions for Council and volunteers.



# Information and Involvement

## 3. Health and Safety Policies

Council has responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 to identify and manage hazards for workers and visitors in the area. This requires an effective health and safety management system to address liabilities related to staff, contractors, and the identification and management of workplace hazards for visitors.

Key concerns in the area include security issues such as vandalism and theft, risks associated with recreation in remote areas, safety on Kahuterawa Road due to increasing use, use of appropriate tikanga, and the threat of fire in zones with exotic forest or scrub vegetation. These hazards have the potential to impact visitor safety, recreational use, and biodiversity, making proactive risk management essential.

**Policy 3.1:** Ensure Council's primary duty for the health and safety of staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors to the Kahuterawa Recreation area is met.

This duty is comprised of the following:

- Provide clear information and/or signage for hazards (e.g., steep trails, fire risks, or remote areas).
- Ensure safe access roads and parking areas.
- Ensure that fire prevention and management plans are in place and regularly updated.
- Assess security concerns, such as theft or vandalism, to help protect both visitors and infrastructure.
- Ensure helicopter landing sites and fire ponds are maintained and operational.
- Ensure volunteer health and safety plans are in place and adequate.
- Ensure public have information of basic emergency processes.

**Policy 3.2:** Rangitāne may choose to attend and be part of any key induction of staff or volunteers.

**NOTE:** The Manawatu Mountain Bike Club and Council have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which includes understanding that the Manawatu Mountain Bike Club manages the health and safety of their volunteers and contractors who carry out mountain bike track building and maintenance.

## 4. Signage, Communication and Community Involvement Policies

New users of the area will benefit from clear and helpful information about tracks, facilities, hazards, and boundaries between public and private land. To ensure a positive experience and avoid trespassing, effective signage, maps, and other resources are essential.

The Kahuterawa Outdoor Recreation Area (KORA) offers excellent opportunities for environmental education and interpretation. Visitors can learn about native flora and fauna, local history, and the area's unique ecological features and how the area acknowledges mana whenua.

For the most up-to-date and comprehensive information, visitors are encouraged to visit the **Council website**, which serves as the primary resource for maps, track details, safety guidelines, and educational content. This ensures that all users have access to the information they need to enjoy the area safely and responsibly.

The Council and volunteers working at the KORA have rural neighbours. Council will continue to be a good neighbour and needs to manage its activities with neighbours in mind.

**Policy 4.1:** Take a coordinated approach to development, volunteering, information and maintenance within the KORP area.

**Policy 4.2:** Council and stakeholders provide up-to-date information on the KORA. The following types of information will be provided;

- Events
- Rangitāne's connection to the area
- Hazards
- Closures
- Trails and walking tracks
- Emergency procedures
- Rules and regulations
- History, education and cultural information
- Other activities in the area.

**Policy 4.3:** Ensure the area has key historical, environmental and cultural knowledge displayed in signage, mahi toi (art) and on the Council website.

**Policy 4.4:** Council and KORA volunteers will communicate any activities or events that might impact the neighbours and the public in a timely manner.

**Policy 4.5:** Work with neighbours and volunteers to ensure the security, management, maintenance and development of the KORA is achieved effectively.

**Development Opportunity 4.6:** Council will work with appropriate users (walking/hiking/mountain biking) to develop a programme to improve the wayfinding system at the park.







# Outdoor Recreation

## 5.1 Outdoor Recreation: supporting opportunities

The Kahuterawa Outdoor Recreation Area (KORA), the city's premier outdoor active recreation<sup>1</sup> playground, offers a wide range of activities such as swimming, fishing, picnicking, hiking, mountain biking, and camping, all set within a stunning natural landscape. Outdoor recreation has long been a cornerstone of Kiwi culture, with New Zealanders embracing it in even the most remote and inaccessible places, both at home and abroad. In recent years, mountain biking has surged in popularity, becoming one of the fastest-growing sports in the country, particularly with the advent of production-capable e-bikes. KORA caters to these evolving interests, providing a space where tradition and innovation in outdoor recreation intersect.

The development of KORA's network of walking tracks and mountain-bike trails has been driven largely by the passion and dedication of volunteers, supported by the Council. This community-led approach has been instrumental in creating a space that reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of Palmerston North's residents and visitors. To build on this success, it is essential to continue investing in the area's infrastructure, accessibility, and environmental sustainability.

**Policy 5.1.1:** support a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities at the Kahuterawa Outdoor Recreation Area. The main activities are:

- Kayaking
- Walking/Hiking
- Trail running
- Camping and campfires
- Horse riding<sup>2</sup>
- Swimming
- Picnicking
- Fishing
- Orienteering
- Hunting<sup>2</sup>
- Dogs and dog walking
- Motorised recreation<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alongside Te Apiti Manawatu  
<sup>2</sup> By permit in Gordon Kear Forest

## 5.2 Mountain Biking

The Manawatu Mountain Bike Club (MMBC) takes responsibility for building and maintaining tracks that are available to their members, as well as the general public and visitors from outside the region. They have constructed over 40km, to date, with plans for a further 10–15km. The trails range in abilities (grades) and the club activity seeks to cater to a wide variety of riding preferences from young kids right through to advanced technical riding.

Council provides an annual contribution towards the track maintenance and the club resources the new track builds and rest of the maintenance costs through fundraising activities and volunteer work. A 2022 Memorandum of Understanding details the roles and responsibilities of MMBC and the Council. Council purchased the land between the lower carpark and the stream which could be used for picnicking, camping and also a mountain bike skills area.

Arapuke Forest park and its mountain biking is recognised in the regional economic development agency (CEDA) and features in their promotional materials.

For more information refer to the club and park websites: <https://www.arapuketrails.co.nz/>  
<https://mmbc.co.nz/>

**Policy 5.2.1:** support the Manawatu Mountain Bike Club to promote mountain biking in the region.

**Policy 5.2.2:** provide permits and access to the area for appropriate booked events.

**Policy 5.2.3:** maintain the MoU between Council and the Manawatu Mountain Bike Club.

**Policy 5.2.4:** ensure the Manawatu Mountain Bike Club maintains track grading and signage to recognised national standards.

**Policy 5.2.5:** support the Manawatu Mountain Bike Club development of the area for mountain biking.

**Note:** Council purchased the land between the lower carpark and the stream which could be used for picnicking, camping and also a mountain bike skills area.

**Development Opportunity 5.2.6:** Investigate options for acquisition of the private property adjacent to Kahuterawa Road end carpark to develop learner and family mountain biking trails.

**Development Opportunity 5.2.7:** Should the Epic Ride prove viable during the review of the Turitea Reserve Management Plan, then assess the implications for the KORA.

### 5.3 Walking and Running

Walking, including short walks along part of the Sledge Track or Back Track, to day-tramps into Hardings Park, are an important part of recreational use of the area. Running is also popular with some users.

There is potential to provide a greater range of recreational walking and running opportunities in the area through development of a short 5km loop track. The Central Economic Development Agency (CEDA) recommended shorter loop tracks as a key recreation opportunity that they believed would attract high use.

**Policy 5.3.1:** provide walking and running opportunities for a wide range of abilities and fitness.

Any walking track development proposals are assessed against the following priorities:

- Short loops that incorporate existing tracks and are close to carpark and picnicking areas
- Provide links to existing tracks
- Provide access to significant views or vistas

**Policy 5.3.2:** Ensure the Department of Conservation (DoC) track standards are maintained.

**Development Opportunity 5.3.3:** Investigate options for the development of a short family-friendly loop walking track that begins and ends at the Kahuterawa Road end carpark/entrance.

### 5.4 Fishing

Some fishing for brown trout occurs in the Kahuterawa Stream. This involves a relatively small number of anglers and hours each year. The Stream is an important spawning area for trout that populate the lower reaches of the Manawatu River. Fishing is likely to remain a valued but minor use of the stream. Management will need to focus predominantly on actions that ensure the maintenance of water-quality, so it is attractive as a fish habitat and for fish spawning.

**Policy 5.4.1:** Maintain established fishing access points along the Kahuterawa Stream.

### 5.5 Picnicking

Picnicking used to occur around Black Bridge and occurs at Kahuterawa Reserve, particularly in summer and in association with swimming. There is opportunity to improve the attractiveness and use of these picnicking areas. This offers potential to extend the variety of use of the area and provide for combined family/group outings for individuals with a range of abilities and interests. Some individuals may wish to relax at a picnic site while others are doing a short walking or riding circuit.

**Policy 5.5.1:** Maintain the existing picnic infrastructure and associated amenities.

**Policy 5.5.2:** Develop a plan that identifies all existing and potential picnicking areas. Where possible prioritise picnicking areas that complement existing activity – such as swimming.

### 5.6 Swimming

Swimming in the Kahuterawa Stream occurs during summer. Informal swimming holes are present around various open access areas along the stream. Providing basic walking access to these areas and picnicking opportunities on adjacent flat ground will be valuable.

**Policy 5.6.1:** Maintain access to existing swimming holes at the Kahuterawa Recreation areas.

### 5.7 Kayaking

Kayaking in this area is infrequent but highly valued. The stream is typically paddled during flood conditions, starting from Gordon Kear Forest. These conditions occur roughly 3–4 times a year. The trip is only suitable for experienced whitewater kayakers. Maintaining access to the waterway and keeping it clear of debris has become less of an issue since the forest harvesting took place.

**Policy 5.7.1:** Informally monitor access points for kayakers.

### 5.8 Horse Riding

Gordon Kear Forest is occasionally used for organised horse rides, which require one-off approval from Council. This approach will continue. Ongoing access for horse riding within the active recreation zone is not considered appropriate due to potential conflicts with mountain bikers and walkers.

**Policy 5.8.1:** Assess one-off applications for horse-related events in Gordon Kear Forest.

### 5.9: Camping & Campfires

Camping is provided for at the Kahuterawa Reserve; but is generally not permitted in the active recreation area or in Harding's Park under the Turitea Reserve Management Plan.

Te Araroa Trail walkers sometimes camp in the open space at the Kahuterawa Road end carpark and park entrance. This, in combination with the acquisition of the farm paddock next to the Kahuterawa Road End carpark and the upgrade of the toilet, now allows for future consideration of camping.

However, there have been issues with camping in the Kahuterawa Reserve – with damage to vegetation, litter and behaviour. Any camping needs to be short term only, principally to support the Te Araroa Trail use. The sites are not suitable for heavy or extended use having no potable water supplies, washing or cooking facilities.

Fireplaces are provided at Kahuterawa Reserve. There is also some use of informal campfires around the Kahuterawa Road end. Campfires can be an important aspect of picnicking and outdoor experience. However, they pose risks to forest and biodiversity resources if not adequately controlled. Provision of a small number of safe fire areas at Kahuterawa Reserve and Kahuterawa Road end will allow controlled access to campfires.

**Policy 5.9.1:** Short stay camping will be allowed at the Kahuterawa Reserve and Kahuterawa Road End. You may camp once in any six month period, for up to two nights.

**Exceptions –** Council will consider applications for group bookings in association with events on a case-by-case basis.

**Policy 5.9.2:** Campfires are not permitted outside Council provided fireplaces and barbecues.

### 5.10 Dogs

Dogs can be a threat to neighbouring farming operations through attacks on stock and through risks of sheep measles spreading. Uncontrolled dogs can impact on the enjoyment of recreational users. Recreational walking with dogs is popular and dogs are often used to aid hunting in areas of the remote experience zone. Finding a balance around dogs in the area is not simple. The Department of Conservation allows two dogs per hunting permit holder in the adjacent Tararua Forest Park. Controls relating to dogs also need to be compatible with the Turitea Reserve Management Plan covering Hardings Park. This plan allows 2 dogs per group that must be under close control.

**Policy 5.10.1:** A maximum of two dogs per group may be taken into the area, and they must be under control at all times (if a dog is not under voice control it must be on the leash).

**Policy 5.10.2:** Restriction of dog access may be required where pest control operations are undertaken.

### 5.11 Hunting

Hunting is a well-established recreation activity in the Tararua Ranges and Hardings Park. However, access to these areas is often through the KORP area. While this is permitted, this is conditional upon hunters (taking this route) adhering to both the law and Council's Safe Firearms Transit guidelines below.

**Policy 5.11.1:** Hunters with up-to-date permits are allowed to access their hunting grounds through the KORP.

To eliminate the risk of a firearms incident while accessing a hunting-permitted zone through a recreation area, the following apply:

- The firearm must be unloaded (the chamber is empty)
- The magazine is removed, emptied and packed in within a pack or belt.
- There is no ammunition connected in any way to the firearm.
- The bolt is removed from the action, the firearm is broken, or the empty chamber flag is active.
- The firearm is transported through the recreation zone in a firearms carry-case and/or is not visible to recreation users.

### 5.12: Motorised Recreation

Gordon Kear Forest (GKF) is used for occasional organised club drives. One off access for this is provided by Council. Historically (approximately 20 years ago) four-wheel drives used the Back Track. This is no longer possible due to the closed bridge at the top of the track and no longer appropriate due to the level of use by walkers and mountain bikers. Retaining controlled access for organised club activities in GKF will remain available on a permit basis. 4WD access in this area is less likely to result in conflict with other users due to the lower intensity of use and greater restriction on access.

**Policy 5.12.1:** Provide access for organised groups to ride in Gordon Kear Forest on a permit basis.



# Natural Landscapes and Ecosystems

The native vegetation, wildlife, and ecosystems within this reserve are not only critical for their intrinsic biodiversity value but also serve as the cornerstone of the area's appeal for outdoor recreation. Degraded or fragmented ecosystems directly diminish the quality and desirability of recreational experiences, reducing the area's capacity to attract visitors and sustain long-term community engagement. The presence of intact natural landscapes, thriving wildlife populations, and ecologically functional habitats ensures that the reserve remains a vibrant destination for walking, hiking, birdwatching, and other nature-based activities.

## 6.1: Integrated Catchment Approach

**Policy 6.1.1:** Consider the management of the Kahuterawa ecosystems and natural landscapes at a catchment level.

This should include:

- Consideration of plans and programmes developed for adjacent catchments.
- Communication between volunteers, Council, neighbours and partners involved in the catchment.

## 6.2 Ecological Restoration and Linkages

The KORA plays a pivotal role in linking the upland forests of the Turitea Reserve and Tararua Forest Park to the Kahuterawa Valley's lowland habitats, creating vital pathways for native species to thrive. By addressing threats such as possums, rats, and invasive weeds through targeted control programs, the area is being restored to support resilient ecosystems. Collaborative efforts with Horizons Regional Council and neighbouring landowners are strengthening these connections, ensuring safe passage for species like the nationally endangered Powelliphanta traversii tararuaensis snail and fostering biodiversity resilience across the catchment.

These restoration initiatives align with the Council's Green Corridors project, which aims to expand native habitats and enhance ecological linkages from the Tararua Ranges to the Manawatū River. By prioritising pest management and weed control in partnership with local communities and agencies, KORA is becoming a model for landscape-scale conservation.

Restored habitats not only protect vulnerable species but also enrich outdoor experiences, offering visitors vibrant forests, clean waterways, and thriving wildlife. Through sustained collaboration, KORA exemplifies how ecological restoration can safeguard New Zealand's natural heritage while ensuring future generations inherit a landscape teeming with life.

**Policy 6.2.1:** Enhance and restore biodiversity in the Kahuterawa catchment.

This will be achieved in the following manner:

**6.2.1(a):** Continue to support the native forest natural regeneration of the margins of the streams and steeper slopes.

**6.2.1(b):** Pest control strategies (for both plant and animal pests that are compliant with regional strategies) maintained at current levels.

Prioritise weed eradication in the following manner:

- Recently established weeds that are localised in their distribution
- Those that place biodiversity conservation at most immediate risk
- Easily controlled and eradicated weeds
- Weeds have a low risk of reinvasion
- Weeds score highly in terms of weed characteristics under national classification systems

Animal pest control strategies will:

- Take a catchment approach
- Ensure work with neighbours to develop a coordinated approach
- Be cost effective
- Have a low risk to non-target species, recreational users and neighbours
- Use best practice approach to pest management
- Are undertaken to achieve targets in Appendix I

**6.2.1(c):** Consider and assess applications for ecological restoration proposals & initiatives, including:

- planting days
- events
- volunteer days



**6.2.1(d):** Minimise risk of introduction or spread of pests into the Kahuterawa catchment.

- Utilise wash-downs for operational gear
- encourage users to clean at-risk boots and gear prior to visiting the reserve).
- Avoid using road metal sourced from high weed areas
- Provide information on prevention of weed introduction

**6.2.1(e):** Ensure fencing with neighbours is stock-proof and effectively ensures stock is excluded from KORA areas.

**Policy 6.2.2:** Planted native vegetation will use appropriate species and seed sources and consider bird feed plants.

**Policy 6.2.3:** Planted restoration opportunities and pest management operations will prioritise native plant species that have been removed or reduced form the area by the impact of pests.

**Policy 6.2.4:** Create ecological linkages where possible.

The following will contribute to this:

- Encourage linkages on neighbouring properties
- Prioritise linkages that contribute to the development of "green corridors" to lowland areas via the Kahuterawa Valley

**Policy 6.2.5:** Enhance biodiversity across the area utilising pest management strategies (for both plant and animal pests).

## 6.3: Rural Landscapes

The areas covered by this plan are vital to preserving the high-quality rural and natural character of the Kahuterawa Valley and its upper catchment. Activities such as road widening and the development of tracks or structures—particularly on prominent ridgelines - could undermine these landscape values. Road upgrades and new infrastructure should be carefully managed to minimise their negative impacts on the area's visual and ecological integrity.

**Policy 6.3.1:** All development of the KORA and management practices will consider any implications on the visual landscape in the design phase and prior to construction.

**Policy 6.3.2:** Any road development will strive to maintain a balance between safety and impacts on the rural character of the area.

## 6.4 Forest Harvesting & Silviculture

The planting of exotic harvest species was undertaken with the intention to provide tree species that contribute to recreation in the area and also provide income via harvesting in high-value exotic small stands. Planning was completed in order to maximise recreation opportunities, maximise income from harvesting and to minimise impact of future harvesting on biodiversity and recreation. While harvesting is many years off, the trees will need ongoing pruning, thinning and maintenance to ensure a profitable harvest.

**Policy 6.4.1:** Maintain exotic harvest forest stands in order to maximise recreation and income opportunities.





# Monitoring

Monitoring serves as a critical tool to evaluate the effectiveness of management strategies in achieving established objectives and implementing targeted policies. It enables the identification of necessary adjustments to ensure the plan's goals are met. For instance, tracking native vegetation regeneration allows for assessing whether key canopy tree species and understorey plants are recovering adequately. Much of the intensive monitoring that was occurring when harvesting was in full swing will now go back to a maintenance model.

In the KORA region, such monitoring initiatives are integrated with the Council's broader state-of-the-environment reporting frameworks. This alignment ensures consistency with regional environmental assessments and strengthens the capacity to inform adaptive management strategies. Future monitoring efforts will be designed in direct reference to these comprehensive reporting systems, enhancing their relevance and utility in guiding conservation and policy decisions.

A significant monitoring programme was undertaken in the early years of the KORP implementation and development. In recent years the programme was paused as the pest control and forest reestablishment and regeneration was embedded. Periodic monitoring will provide snapshots of health and progress.

## 7.1: Assess the Effectiveness of Management Actions

**Policy 7.1.1:** Incorporate KORP into the recreational Parkcheck survey once every two years.

**Policy 7.1.2:** Complete snapshot monitoring of biodiversity outcomes (Section 5: Natural Landscapes and Ecosystems) every 3- 5 years. This monitoring will include:

- Forest canopy condition, particularly of browse susceptible species
- Understorey condition including regeneration of main canopy species and maintenance of diverse understorey
- Distribution of and rare, threatened and vulnerable species

**Policy 7.1.3:** Complete snapshot monitoring of animal and plant pests every 3 – 5 years.

This will include:

- Plant pests
- Animal pests (including possums, wild cats, rodents and stoats)
- Large exotic animal pests (such as deer).



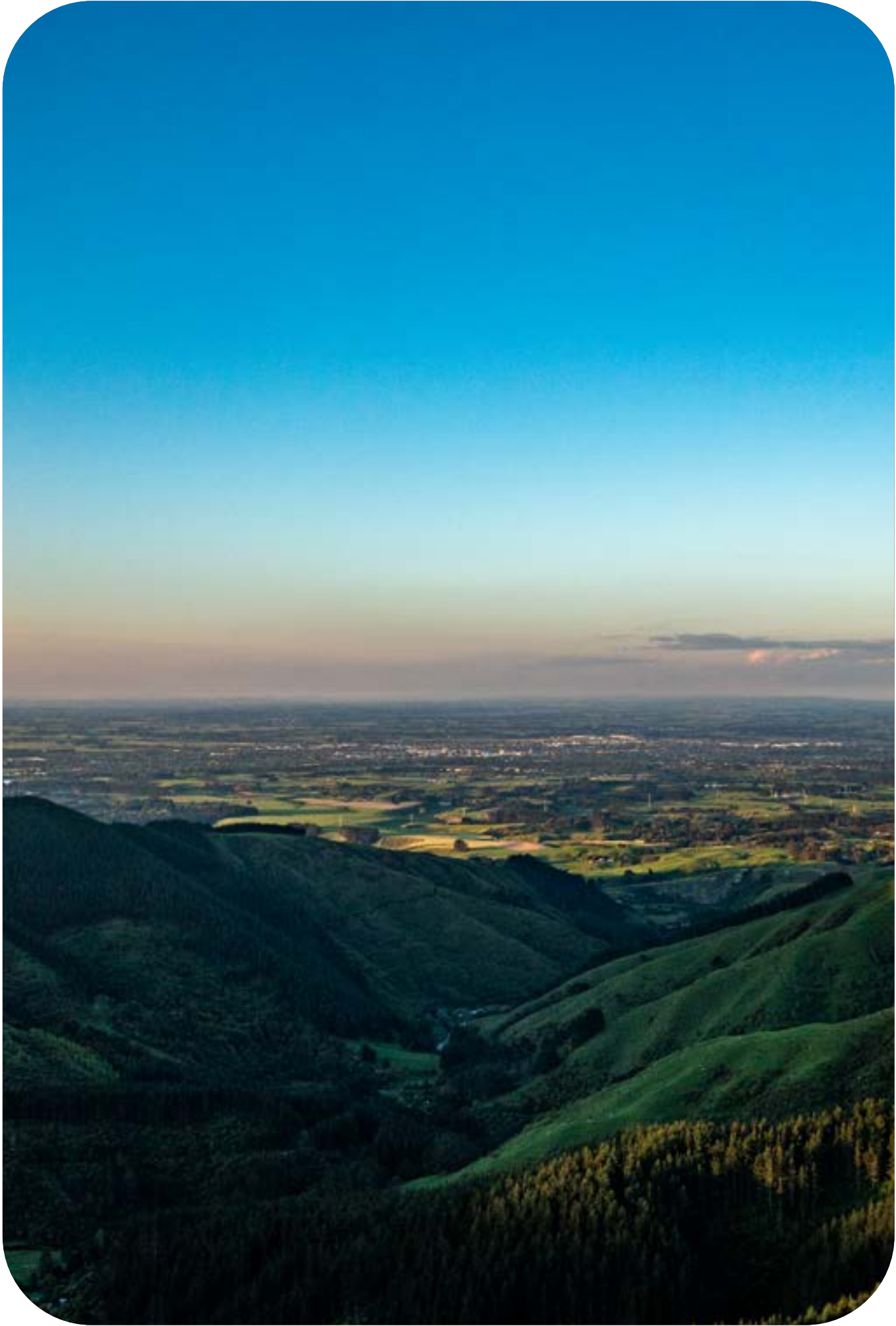


# Appendix 1: Animal Pest Control Targets

| Animal   | Area  | Control target  | Notes   |
|----------|---|---|---|
| Possum   | Snail and Vulnerable Plant species areas (Woodpecker, Sledge Track, Back Track) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ &lt; 5% possum residual trap catch (RTC)</li> <li>➤ Maintain a stable canopy of main canopy species and avoid the removal of vulnerable canopy species by possums</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Protection for snails and Kaimahi</li> <li>➤ May expand target onto adjacent and down valley private land with landowners support</li> <li>➤ Links to Hardings Park and Turitea Reserve Control</li> </ul> |
|          | Northern Harding's Park   | < 10% residual trap catch (RTC)   | Currently maintained as a buffer to Turitea catchment possum control.   |
|          | Other Areas   | No other target at present, but if control is introduced in adjacent Tararua Forest Park, then set appropriate control targets  | Currently no control in Tararua Forest Park. Undertaking control in areas such as Gordon Kear is unlikely to be cost effective while there is this major re-invasion source.  |
| Goat     | Woodpecker, Sledge Track, Back Track  | Take all practical steps to eradicate   | Goats only present as occasional visitors   |
|          | Other Areas   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sufficient control to minimise movement.</li> <li>➤ Eradicate where feasible.</li> </ul>   | Control currently undertaken in and around Turitea water catchment  |
| Red Deer |   | To a level that allows adequate regeneration of main canopy tree species and palatable understorey species.   |   |
| Pigs     | Woodpecker, Sledge Track, Back Track  | Take all practical steps to eradicate   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Important for protection of snails.</li> <li>➤ Are occasional visitors to these areas.</li> </ul>  |
|          | Other Areas   |   | Control may be required in relation to any specific problems or decline in vegetation condition.  |



| Animal     | Area                                 | Control target  | Notes   |
|------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Mustelids  |                                      | No direct control                                     |   |
| Feral Cats |                                      | No direct control                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Encourage any nearby subdivisions to be “cat free”.</li><li>➤ Work with neighbours to ensure cats are de-sexed.</li></ul>   |
| Rodents    | Woodpecker, Sledge Track, Back Track | Control of rodents in conjunction with possum control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Focus where snail populations are present</li><li>➤ Likely to involve use of brodifacoum or other toxin in conjunction with maintenance control of possum populations</li></ul> |
|            | Other Areas                          | No direct control                                     |   |







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