



**Hawke's Bay Regional Parks Network**

**Pakowhai Regional Park  
Individual Park Plan  
2015-2024**



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### **Regional Parks Network Plan**

#### **Pakowhai Regional Park Individual Park Management Plan 2015-2024**

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## **Background**

Pakowhai Regional Park (formerly Pakowhai Country Park) was established in 1973 following the efforts of a committed community group led by Dr Michael Bostock. It's location was determined by the diversion of the Ngaruroro River as part of the Heretaunga Plains Flood Control Scheme in 1968, this river being relocated several hundred metres to the North and leaving behind a sliver of alluvial gravel land. Running from a groundwater source near Twyford, the Raupere Stream that now runs through the park was straightened and deepened as part of the flood control work, and is separated from the Ngaruroro by a large stopbank that forms the northern boundary of the park. This stream joins the Karamu Stream on the opposite side of Pakowhai Road, forming the Ngaruroro River (although known as the Clive River). It was in this location that Pakowhai (an old established pa) was located, but unfortunately all that remains of this pa is two tombstones (marking the graves of Te Meihana and Heretaungahaukunuiaarau).

The park has been administered by the Hawke's Bay Regional Council since 1996, having been formerly managed by The Landcare Foundation (and Pakowhai Country Park Trust Board prior to this). Following the death of Doug Walker, Chairman of the Regional Council, approval was given to develop the park for public use as an appropriate memorial. Educational signs were also erected providing information about the Heretaunga Plains Flood Control Scheme. Since this time, several concept plans have been developed for the park, all concentrating on improving the recreational and educational attributes of the park. A book prepared by the Hawke's Bay Regional Council in 2012 provides a potted history of the significant planting programmes that have been undertaken (including both exotic and native plants), and lists many of the community led donations and volunteer activities that have taken place. The main car park land is owned by the Hastings District Council, and was developed jointly by both Councils with additional funding provided by Rotary.

The park has several key areas of interest. The Hawke's Bay Farm Forestry Association planted approximately 2.7ha of *Pinus radiata* trees in 1974 to be managed for production purposes. Many of the original trees have either been thinned or harvested, but a total of 156 trees have been retained to showcase best practice silviculture. At nearly 40 years of age, it is estimated that these trees have up to 20 years more life before they are likely to become a safety hazard from falling limbs.

There are a several memorials or tributes within the park, represented by seats, tables, names of paths (such as the Doug Walker Memorial Path) and trees (including some trees planted near to the old Pakowhai Road bridge to mark the Erebus airplane crash anniversary). A prominent stone memorial to a General Freyberg is located near the entrance to the park, this having been erected by Pakowhai Country Park Trust Board member Earl Lee sometime last century.

An exotic tree arboretum has been planted along the northern boundary, adjacent to the Ngaruroro River stopbank. Based on a plan by Titchener Monzingo Aitken developed in 2000, the concept behind this arboretum is to allow for specimen conifers, oaks, eucalypts and other flowering trees from North America, Europe, Asia and Australia to develop into an educational resource. Due to the gravel beds into which the tree's have been planted, many have struggled to become established. A wetland has also been developed in a small depression near the northwestern corner (formerly a poplar and willow nursery), and a small patch of regenerating native bush is being managed at the southwestern end. The park is also used for emergency grazing relief when there is a flood risk to the Ngaruroro River.

Many of the stories behind these key areas of interest are not evident to users of the park.

The park is not widely recognised as having any specific ecological value, but it is an important 'island' of dense mature trees surrounded by horticultural activity. A number of the more common native birds (tui, bellbird) forage throughout the park (particularly in the native vegetation areas), and stream provides habitat for tuna (eel), inanga and taraute (trout).

Pakowhai Regional Park has become a popular recreation destination. Uniquely placed approximately equidistant between Napier and Hastings, it provides an open public amenity space, enhanced by the stands of mature trees and the presence of the stream. For many years it has been used by dog owners, with this becoming a more common activity since changes to the Hastings District dog policies restricting off-leash dog activities in many district reserves. Largely the influx of dog walking activity has been beneficial – increasing patronage of the park – but there have been some adverse effects (such as faeces and erosion of the stream banks). Recent introductions of dog 'poo bags' and additional litter bins have proved beneficial.

Cyclists are discouraged from using the park, although the old Pakowhai Road bridge provides access to the Regional Cycleway that traverses along the Ngaruroro River stop bank.

Presently the Hastings District Council is exploring options to build a new arterial road linking Pakowhai through Whakatu to SH2 near Mangateretere. This proposal is likely to have an impact on the entrance to the park and on access to the old road bridge. It also provides a potential opportunity to expand the park to the eastern side of Pakowhai Road, enhancing the connection to Karamu Stream. This may, in time, also provide for additional recreational opportunities such as fishing or kayaking.

The long term strategy for the park is to respect the original vision set out by the Hastings and District Beautifying Society (formed by Dr Michael Bostock) to *'foster the preservation and planting of trees and to encourage a better standard of town planning and architectural design'*, whilst at the same time respecting the desire for that society to have a *'rural park where exotic trees and farm forestry plantings, wildlife ponds, riverside walks and picnic areas'* could be used. However, it is recognised that the park is not well suited to provide suitable swimming and fishing holes as was originally envisaged, nor is it suited as a camping ground. Sites for these may become available in the Karamu Stream.

In the context of the Hawke's Bay Regional Parks Network, it is considered that it is appropriate that Pakowhai Regional Park be developed for use by dog owners. This activity has suffered from displacement from other locations through the introduction of other policies or other activities, and the park provides a well contained (and well used) open space where dogs can safely roam off-leash. It is intended that this activity become a key focus of the park's long term development, such that design and management solutions are explored to counter the adverse effects of the activity. At the same time, the park remains an important habitat for birds and retains an important history – both pre-European and from more recent times. These important aspects need to be reflected in any future development plans.

### **Park Values**

- Important recreation area, particularly for dog walking
- High amenity through presence of exotic and native trees, and the flow of the Raupere Stream
- Significant local history and tangata whenua value
- An important habitat environment – an 'ecological island' that contrasts to the surrounding horticultural land uses

### **Park Visions**

Pakowhai Regional Park is an important recreation destination that is to be primarily managed as a safe place for off-leash dog walking, whilst reflecting its heritage and habitat values. The key visions of the park are as follows:

- Adding value to Hawke's Bay tourism through the provision of a well maintained park asset with a high degree of aesthetic amenity
- A safe and controlled off-leash dog walking and other walking/picnic activity;
- A place to broaden public knowledge about the history of the park and the people who have contributed to its development
- A habitat for native and exotic birds
- A repository for continued public funding and volunteering for the benefit of the wider community

### **Management Focus**

Pakowhai Regional Park is to be managed as a Class 3 Regional Park. Key focusses include:

- An ongoing management programme of the exotic and native trees so that the park retains (and enhances) its significant amenity value and continues to provide important habitat for birds and fish
- Design for and management of the adverse effects of off-leash dog activity within the park, including (but not limited to) faeces dropping, urine marking and stream bank erosion
- Extension of dog-walking and dog-training facilities within the park to encourage public use, to reinforce dog owner responsibilities, and to assist in reducing antisocial dog behaviour in the wider community
- Ongoing management of CPTED issues
- Incorporation of the proposed changes to the access to the park, brought about by proposed road works by the Hastings District Council
- Managing the impacts of increased popularity