

3. Heritage Preservation

3.1 NATURAL FEATURES

Objective

To preserve the natural features and scenery of the park.

The human values of all groups of visitors to the park derive from natural and largely unmodified scenery dominated by large features such as mountains, lakes and broad glacial valleys. The preservation of the landscape is essential for the maintenance of the spiritual values that are particularly important to both the tāngata whenua as kaitiaki and to all New Zealanders who treasure this park.

The high quality of the scenery is one of park's principal attributes. Landscape values, as well as natural values, can be adversely affected by the development of facilities such as telecommunication structures, buildings, huts, signs, bridges, fences and tracks. By careful consideration of the impact of development on the landscape, detrimental effects can be avoided, by minimising the number of built structures, or mitigated by using colours and shapes that blend in with the environment and by locating buildings away from ridgelines and lake margins. The quality of design and materials often determines how well structures fit into the natural surroundings.

Some facilities such as alpine huts and route markers must be highly visible for safety reasons. In these instances a conscious decision should be made that this is the case. For all other facilities, specific attempts should be made to reduce their visual impacts.

For private or commercial structures the applicant must first show that there are no practicable alternative sites outside the park. The primary objective to retain the undeveloped nature of the park means that commercial accommodation developments would be opposed, as they are not in keeping with the management philosophy of the park. Mitigation measures including, but not limited to, those mentioned above would have to be implemented in any approved structural development (see also section 4.3 Concessions).

Sensitive design and placement of facilities can be welcoming and enhance the experience. Site modification and structures, or even poorly controlled human use (such as heavily used, poorly formed tracks), can intrude on naturalness, especially in remote areas. When assessing proposed developments or structures in the park, all relevant factors need to be considered, including:

- impacts on indigenous flora, fauna and natural ecosystems;
- whether the structure can be located outside the park or co-sited with other developments;
- the impact on the landscape and the methods to avoid or mitigate the impact including;
 - sensitive design and colours that blend into the natural environment;
 - sensitive location, such as adjacent to existing structures or avoiding ridge tops and lake margins;

- the amount of earth and vegetation disturbance and its visual effect;
- the potential for successful rehabilitation/restoration of disturbed areas;
- the possibility of further development and/or expansion of developments and/or structures on the site as a result of allowing this development/structure;
- the biosecurity risks created by development, such as the spread of weeds.

Māori and other New Zealanders place great emphasis on the maintenance of the purity of water. Maintaining water quality in the lakes is essential for the functioning of the whole Buller River system. The main threats to the water quality come from human activities on the lakes and environmental modifications in the Black Valley Stream catchment, including land disturbance. On the lakes, threats arise from human waste and oil pollution from boats; on land, threats come from siltation and pollution due to improper or inadequate control of sewage and stormwater run-off. Threats can arise from high stock numbers and inappropriate pastoral management, such as over-grazing, which can increase soil erosion on the slopes and siltation in the lakes. Stock also threaten natural values where they are allowed to graze into the park boundaries.

Implementation

3.1.1 Any proposed developments (including structures and recreational facilities) or management actions will be assessed according to the factors set out above, in order to preserve the quality of the scenery and other natural features and values.

3.1.2 Management actions and advocacy will seek to preserve the quality of the park waters.

3.2 BIODIVERSITY

Objective

To maintain or restore the diversity and functioning of ecosystems native to the park.

The integrity and functioning of the native forest, alpine and freshwater ecosystems are threatened by introduced plant and animal pests and human activity. Control of these “agents of change” is essential to maintain or restore the natural functioning of the native ecosystems.

The place of the park within the conservancy-wide framework of values and priorities is set out in the Nelson/Marlborough Conservation Management Strategy. One of the main requirements for the park is to acquire further basic knowledge on species distributions and to monitor changes, especially in the rarer and more threatened elements.

Biodiversity within the park has been greatly modified. The native flora and fauna of the park has been disturbed not only by natural events but also by introduced animals, particularly wasps, stoats, deer, chamois, Canada geese, pigs and possums, and by human activities. The invasion by introduced plants and animals and the loss of the native components of the ecosystems have constituted a continual assault on the integrity of the ecosystems and on the mana of the tāngata whenua who are kaitiaki. Anything that leads to the restoration of the viability of the native species also enhances the mana of Māori.

The most significant change, in addition to predation and browsing by introduced animals, has been the spread of weeds, principally along valley floors and well-used tracks. Extensive modification of the flora exists largely on the periphery of the park where clearing by fire or grazing has occurred in the past. The continual cropping of honeydew by wasps has significantly reduced populations of nectivorous (nectar feeding) birds, while direct competition with wasps for prey has reduced population densities of insectivorous birds, such as kaka.

Landcare's Research's work at the head of Lake Rotoroa includes a range of studies into, for example, the effects of beech mast on ecosystem dynamics and the biology, impacts and means of control of wasps in the honeydew beech forest ecosystems. The research area is also used as a reference site for the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project. Particular support should be given to research and monitoring programmes that assist understanding of park ecosystems.

Lake Rotoiti contains the oldest known eels (tuna) anywhere in the country. This is due to the cold, unproductive nature of the lake, which makes the growth rate extremely slow. The eels (tuna) reach sexual maturity at around 90 years of age. The lakes are part of a mere 6% of the country's freshwater lakes that still contain unexploited eel (tuna) populations with access to the sea. As such the protection of the eels (tuna) within the lakes is of prime importance for both their ecological and scientific values. Lakes Rotoiti and Rotoroa are an important national haven for maturation to breeding age, with unimpeded access to the sea for spawning and re-population.

Pests

Monitoring programmes are required to detect the arrival of new pests (such as waterweed) and to detect significant changes in current pest populations, particularly wild animals such as goats and chamois. Continued research, as part of conservancy and national programmes, is also required to find effective means for controlling significant pests.

Exterminating plant and animal pests within the park is a significant challenge for the Department. It is therefore essential that every reasonable effort be made to prevent the introduction or further spread of plant and animal pests in the first instance. Such efforts should include:

- continual monitoring for new pests and the spread of existing pests;
- the extermination of plant and animal pests where possible;
- placement of appropriate signage at boat launching ramps advising of the necessary actions to prevent the introduction or spread of pest plants and animals within the park. Such actions should include ensuring boats and trailers are free of pests prior to launching;
- ensuring all earthmoving machinery and/or equipment is free from plant or animal pests prior to entry to the park. Exceptions should only include emergency works as defined under the Resource Management Act 1991;
- ensuring necessary conditions are placed on concessionaires to prevent the introduction or spread of plant and animal pests (see also section 4.3 Concessions).

General requirements and procedures for pest control are set out in the Conservation Management Strategy. In assessing the appropriate means of control (including biological or chemical agents) of any pest, all relevant factors need to be considered, including:

- urgency and necessity for control;
- impacts on non-target species;
- effectiveness of alternative methods;
- relative cost effectiveness; and
- long-term effectiveness of the control agent.

In determining the extent to which management should endeavour to restore the park to a more natural state (eg. extermination of an exotic species) the Department will consider whether:

- the objective is attainable; and
- failure to achieve the objective could detrimentally affect the ecology of the park.

Animal pests

Wasps are a major ecological problem for which no practical widespread control is currently available. Local wasp control is carried out in late summer and only in areas where there is high visitor use. Continued research into wasp impacts and new control methods is required.

Possoms are targeting the populations of mistletoe and rātā around the shores of Lake Rotoiti. These are some of the most threatened plants in the park. However, because they lie within easy reach of the village, work on their preservation can be readily carried out. Control of possums throughout the rest of the park is more difficult and usually requires the use of toxins.

Goats were a major problem in the Mātakitai and Glenroy valleys (map 7). Goats are absent in the adjacent Rotoroa Management Area but a risk exists that they could invade from the Tütaki valley. Intensive goat control has reduced numbers considerably over the last few years and extermination of goats from most of the park appears to be a realistic goal. Continued monitoring and control of goats adjacent to the park is required to prevent re-invasion.

Canada geese are spreading throughout the South Island high country and have established in the park. They have the potential to become a pest along the rivers and lakeshores through grazing of native vegetation, spreading seeds of plant pests and because of the large amount of faeces they produce, which can have significant negative impacts on water quality and clarity.

Pest fish such as koi carp and gambusia would be a major problem if they managed to get into the waters of the park, particularly the lakes. Their introduction must be prevented through continual monitoring for their presence and immediate actions to remove them should they be found.

Red deer and chamois are currently largely controlled by recreational and commercial hunters. The Department will continue to encourage recreational and commercial hunters. Departmental control of deer and chamois will also be undertaken where necessary. Any decline in commercial wild animal recovery effort is likely to result in increases in deer and chamois numbers. Monitoring will be carried out to determine the need for and type of control required.

Departmental control of deer and chamois will be undertaken where:

- deer and chamois are having an undesirable impact on particular plant communities;
- the impact on other park users can be minimised through the location or timing of the activity.

Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project

A conservancy-wide assessment of threatened species and communities was carried out in 1996 to identify areas for an integrated programme of pest control, research into species ecology and monitoring of the ecosystems to measure the effectiveness of various pest control techniques.

The assessment resulted in the establishment of the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project, covering an area of 825 hectares of beech forest, along the shores of Lake Rotoiti, on the lower slopes of the St Arnaud Range. In 2001 the project expanded its stoat, wasp and rat control to include areas further south along the shore of Lake Rotoiti (see Map 4). The project seeks to restore the beech forest community (with particular emphasis on the honeydew cycle) through an integrated and intensive pest control programme.

The objectives are:

- i. To reduce wasp, rodent, stoat, feral cat, possum and deer populations to sufficiently low levels to allow the recovery of the indigenous ecosystem components (especially kākā, parakeet (kākāriki), tui, bellbird (korimako), robin (pītoitoi), long-tailed bat (pekapeka) and mistletoe) and ecosystem processes (especially the honeydew cycle).
- ii. To re-introduce recently depleted species, such as mohua/yellowhead, kiwi and kōkako (South Island subspecies if possible) once the beech forest ecosystem is sufficiently restored (i.e. pests have been removed to a level where native species are likely to survive).
- iii. To advocate for indigenous species conservation and long-term pest control by providing an accessible example of a functioning honeydew beech forest ecosystem so that a large number of people can experience a beech forest in as near-to-pristine condition as possible.

The project is aimed at eventually managing the Travers valley as a whole catchment and working with the St Arnaud community to apply the pest control programmes to areas of the village and surrounding farmland.

Plant pests

Small populations of willow at Lake Rotoroa and in the Travers valley have nearly been exterminated and should be completely removed in the next decade. At present, some of the most problematic exotic waterweeds are absent from the lakes. However, the continued use of the lakes by powerboats, often coming from other regions where waterweeds occur, represents a continual threat to the ecosystem. Active campaigns to ensure that boat inspections are carried out and monitoring programmes to detect pest arrival are essential.

Careful consideration needs to be given to species choices in plantations and within communities close to the park. Wilding trees (especially Douglas fir and rowan) can have a significant impact on the flora and fauna. Some garden escapees have yet to be evident because wilding plants are still small or have not begun to seed. Programmes for their control could involve community participation and liaison with Tasman District Council. Residents should also be encouraged to grow non-invasive species

Grazing

The floors of the two main valleys in the Mātakitaki/Glenroy Management Area are conservation areas outside the park and are managed under grazing licences. Given the unfenced nature of the park boundary, stocking levels are set and monitored for adverse effects to ensure that stock management methods are appropriate.

Pets

With increased urbanisation at Rotoiti (especially from St Arnaud to Wairau Saddle) and Rotoroa villages the threats to native fauna from dogs and cats are likely to intensify and residents should be made aware of the adverse environmental effects of keeping pets and encouraged to minimise these effects by adopting responsible pet ownership practices. Park staff living in Departmental accommodation are not permitted to have pets.

Community involvement

Ease of access to key problem areas and proximity to centres of population make the St Arnaud Management Area the focus for community-based activities. The Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project, in the Travers Valley Management Area, is also easily accessible and is a showcase for emphasising the importance of biodiversity and the impact of pests and people upon it. Many people are unaware of the potential threats that garden plants pose but are willing to assist, provided the problem species are identified. Local community participation in weed removal and pest control programmes is an ideal way of raising awareness of potential pests.

Implementation

- 3.2.1 Where practical, significant plant and animal pests will be controlled or eliminated.***
- 3.2.2 Integrity and natural functioning of the park's three principal indigenous ecosystems (forest, alpine tops and freshwater systems) will be preserved through plant and animal pest control, restoration and management of the impacts of human activity.***
- 3.2.3 Particular management attention will be given to threatened species and communities.***

- 3.2.4** *The best examples of ecosystems typical of a biogeographic region may be subject to specific pest and weed control in order to restore their functioning and natural biodiversity.*
- 3.2.5** *The Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project will be managed as a “mainland island” in line with its 10-year strategic management plan.*
- 3.2.6** *Surveys will be carried out to identify significant ecological values and appropriate action will be taken to preserve them.*
- 3.2.7** *Monitoring will be carried out where species or communities are the priority for management, and to detect changes in significant ecological values.*
- 3.2.8** *The re-introduction of native species known to have once been present in the park will be undertaken where appropriate, subject to the obtaining of scientific advice on the proposal, as provided for in the General Policy 8.10.*
- 3.2.9** *The most appropriate and cost-effective methods available, including biological control agents, will be used for pest control.*
- 3.2.10** *Wild animal control will be carried out by the Department, with the assistance of recreational hunters, and/or concession holders.*
- 3.2.11** *Precautions, including instigation of public awareness initiatives, signage at boat ramps and monitoring programmes, will be taken to minimise the risk of aquatic weed introduction into lakes Rotoiti and Rotoroa.*
- 3.2.12** *Sensitive habitats will be monitored for wilding tree invasion and appropriate control programmes will be initiated.*
- 3.2.13** *Willow will be eradicated from the Travers Valley and Rotoroa management areas.*
- 3.2.14** *Conditions will be placed on concessions to ensure no plant or animal pests are introduced or spread (see also section 4.3 Concessions).*
- 3.2.15** *The goat-free status of the Rotoroa Management Area will be maintained.*
- 3.2.16** *Goats will be eliminated from the Mātakitaki/Glenroy Management Area and monitoring and shooting in a buffer area will continue to prevent reinvasion.*
- 3.2.17** *Where the park is bounded by grazed land, stock numbers will be limited and the park margins will be monitored and action taken if necessary to ensure that the browsing impacts are minimised.*
- 3.2.18** *Community awareness of the adverse impacts of garden escapees and pets on the biodiversity of the park will be fostered through publicity on issues and encouragement of community participation in control programmes.*
- 3.2.19** *Publicity on plant and animal pest issues will be used to raise awareness of the risks and to seek controls on the pests.*
- 3.2.20** *Advocacy through the Regional Pest Strategy will be used to emphasise the importance of the control of existing and potential plant pests to preserve park ecosystems.*
- 3.2.21** *Appropriate provisions in the district plans and strategies will be advocated to limit plant and animal threats.*

3.2.22 Support may be given to research programmes that relate to the functioning of ecosystems in the Rotoroa Management Area.

CMS REFERENCES:

Conservancy Overview	p49
Regional Priorities	p387
Legal protection responsibilities for species	p137
Management of threatened species	p141
Research, Survey and Monitoring	p167
Plants Pests	p187
Animal Pests	p195
Fire	p209

3.3 HISTORIC VALUES

Objective

To identify and preserve historic sites and artefacts as far as is compatible with the preservation of natural values.

Kehu and other Māori guides passed on the traditional knowledge of the routes through this area to the earliest settlers and showed them the traditional stopping places and sources of māhinga kai. Little evidence remains today, apart from reverting fern gardens at Lake Rotoroa and a few archaeological sites. Known archaeological sites on the shore at Kerr Bay were recently reburied for their own protection, as part of site landscaping.

From as early as 1848 European settlers attempted to farm various parts of what is now the park. The first lease was issued in 1851 and the last one terminated in 1956 when the park was established, although the lower Travers valley was not added to the park until 1976. Apart from this activity, the park was left largely untouched. There are few signs of the early European activity apart from some vegetation modification that resulted from an extensive fire on Mt Robert and also in the lower Travers valley. No structures from this era remain.

Former alluvial gold mining sites exist in the Mātakitaki valley and near Lake Rotoroa. Further areas may exist, particularly in the Mātakitaki/Glenroy area. All the sites need to be evaluated to determine protection requirements.

Recreational use in the area has extended over 100 years and some huts could require preservation as representatives of the styles of former years. Kea Hut has already been identified for preservation.

The strategy for the park is to continue to identify and preserve historic sites according to the priorities and procedures set out in the Conservation Management Strategy.

Surveys

Knowledge of archaeological sites and historic places is incomplete and further investigation needs to be carried out to identify unknown sites. The understanding of many sites would greatly benefit from research of documentary sources and a programme of oral history recordings. Detailed surveys are necessary in areas where historic values are suspected or inadequately known. Conservation of significant historic places should be effected by a programme of active management.

Māori Involvement

Tāngata whenua need to be actively involved in the management of their wāhi tapu and ngā taonga. They need the opportunity to care for these sites in traditional ways, which may include keeping their existence confidential. The Department must work with tāngata whenua in the management of sites of significance to them and provide the opportunity for an iwi representative to be present at any excavations and archaeological surveys.

Protection

Archaeological and historic sites are easily damaged by both natural processes and human impacts. Erosion, earthquakes, track building, trampling and even tree planting can damage historic sites. The reforestation of a pā site, for example, can destroy the historic values of that site through root damage to the human-made structures. In such circumstances, the preservation of historic values must be weighed against the ecological values of revegetation on a case by case basis.

The Historic Places Act 1993 makes it an offence to modify a historic site without a permit. The Department must ensure that a permit is gained for any site restoration or modification and that sites are not accidentally destroyed. To this end, it is important to discover unknown sites so that they can be protected from inadvertent damage.

Archaeological sites and historic places will continue to be identified and protected according to the priorities and procedures set out in the General Policy, the national Historic Resource Strategy, the Conservation Management Strategy and the conservancy's Historic Resource Strategy. Detailed information on the management of key places is contained in the conservancy register of actively managed historic places.

Interpretation

Interpretation and information can enhance visitor understanding of historic sites and can help them gain an appreciation for the historic values preserved in the park. Opportunities for interpretation of historic sites need to be evaluated according to historic significance and site suitability in terms of public access and interest. In some cases, protecting a site by not publicising its existence may be appropriate as some sites are better able to cope with visitor impacts than others. Where any Māori site is well placed for interpretation, the relevant iwi must be consulted as to the appropriateness of interpretation and its content.

Artefacts

Māori artefacts and their custody are regulated by the Antiquities Act 1975. Māori also have protocols for action following the discovery of Māori artefacts. These include reburial in the place they were found, removal to a marae or placement in a museum. It is up to the relevant iwi, in consultation with the Department, to decide what to do with a Māori artefact, provided action is consistent with the Antiquities Act 1975.

Non-Māori artefacts, including old bottles, are important to our understanding of more recent archaeological and historic sites. In terms of the National Parks Act 1980 it is an offence to remove any artefacts and relics from the park without written authorisation from the Department.

Implementation

- 3.3.1 Appropriate iwi will be consulted where an archaeological survey, management, or interpretation of a Māori site is proposed.***
- 3.3.2 Wāhi tapu and nga taonga will be conserved and managed in a way which incorporates the exercise of kaitiakitanga and appropriate tikanga.***
- 3.3.3 Archaeological and historic surveys will be carried out within the park. Historic sites and artefacts will be protected, restored and interpreted in line with the CMS, the national and conservancy historic resources strategies and the Historic Places Act 1993.***
- 3.3.4 Documentary and oral history of the park and its historic places will be researched. Information will be preserved and any new sites identified will be assessed.***
- 3.3.5 Existing hut sites will be assessed for historic values and their preservation will be encouraged where practical.***
- 3.3.6 Where preservation of historic values conflicts with the preservation of ecological values, each case will be evaluated carefully on its own merits.***
- 3.3.7 The appropriate iwi will be informed of any discovery of a Māori artefact in the park and their advice will be sought on the appropriate protocols for its care, in a manner consistent with the Antiquities Act 1975.***

REFERENCES:

Nelson/Marlborough CMS
Historic Resources, p155-166
National and Conservancy Historic Resource Strategies
Historic Places Act 1993
Antiquities Act 1975