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WILD ANIMAL CONTROL PLAN

1982 - 1987

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KAIMANAWA RECREATIONAL HUNTING AREA

Wild Animal Control Plan

Kaimanawa State Forest Park lies to the south east of Lake Taupo, encompassing in part the Kaimanawa Mountains extending from the Tongariro River in the west to the Mohaka River in the north east. The forest park is administered by the N.Z. Forest Service with the advice of the Kaimanawa-Kaweka State Forest Park Advisory Committee.

A Recreational Hunting Area has been established pursuant to Sections 27, 28 of the Wild Animal Control Act 1977 within the north eastern portion of the forest park from and including the Hinemaiaia Stream catchment south east to the Oamaru River. This plan prescribes the management of the Recreational Hunting Area and has been approved by the National Recreational Hunting Advisory Committee whose function and powers are to advise the Minister of Forests on:

1. Criteria for the selection of recreational hunting areas.
2. The administration of recreational hunting areas including the means of achieving a balance between recreational hunting and other uses being made of recreational hunting areas.
3. Wild animal control plans and other technical reports related to recreational hunting referred to the committee by the Director-General of Forests.
4. The promotion and encouragement of recreational hunting on State forest lands and other land as may be appropriate.
5. Such other matters as are referred to the committee from time to time, by the Minister of Forests.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The north east portion of Kaimanawa State Forest Park was selected as a prospective Recreational Hunting Area in June 1981 by the Forest Service as an alternative to three areas within the forest park proposed by the National Recreational Hunting Advisory Committee. The selection of the area from and including the Tiraki Stream catchment south east to the Oamaru River was endorsed in principle by the forest park advisory committee.

Following public comment on the draft Wild Animal Control Plan for the proposed Kaimanawa Recreational Hunting Area, and receipt of the views of the Scientific Coordinating Committee, the boundary of the proposed area has been modified to exclude the Tiraki Ecological Zone. The Tiraki Ecological Zone was recommended by the Scientific Coordinating committee for dedication as an Ecological Area for its representative red beech/silver beech forest component. Its management to retain the forest and its dependant native wildlife as close as is practicable to its natural state, so as to protect its national scientific and ecological values.

The Kaimanawa Recreational Hunting Area will be managed in accordance with this plan, subservient but complementary to that of the Kaimanawa State Forest Park Management Plan.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

2.1 Physical

The Recreational Hunting Area comprises 23 980 ha of the north eastern portion of Kaimanawa State Forest Park. It takes in some of the headwaters of the Hinemaiaia Stream, Waitahanui Stream, Taharua, Mohaka and Ngaruroro Rivers. The Kaipo River, a major tributary of the Mohaka, lies entirely within the area.

Altitude ranges from 590 m in the Hinemaiaia River to 1547 m on Mt Maungaorangi.

The ridges are often steep sided, particularly in the east and south. To the north there are extensive areas of gently sloping country. Basement rock is greywacke with occasional outcrops of ignimbrite, the whole generally covered with pumice soils and subsoils.

2.2 Forests

The area is almost wholly forested. Tussock or scrublands occur beside the Ngaruroro and Oamaru Rivers and along the northern periphery, and occasionally within the area. Forest gives way to sub-alpine scrub above 1200 or 1300 m. Open tops containing montane grassland occur on Mt. Maungaorangi.

The forest is predominantly red beech/silver beech, rising to almost pure silver beech above 1000 m. Mountain beech occurs towards the south east about Mt. Maungaorangi. Hall's totara, miro and kamahi may occur, but only in the lower Hinemaiaia are podocarps a conspicuous component of the forest. The forests are described in more detail in the Kaimanawa Forest Park Management Plan 1978-1988, and in "Vegetation of the Kaimanawa Ranges" (Elder, 1962).

2.3 Forest Condition

The forests have been modified throughout by deer and possums, but on lower slopes there is, in most places, an adequate cover of understorey plants and replacement canopy species. The situation is less satisfactory in some riparian and gully sites where intensive deer and possum use has caused vegetation depletion and slope instability. At altitudes above 1000 m the forest is strongly modified and there is a serious shortage of saplings to replace the canopy trees, a high proportion of which are collapsing due to age, disease or storm damage. At these higher altitudes steep gully heads are often unstable.

2.4 Forest Surveys

A survey of forest condition and animal population levels was conducted in 1978/79 but the report on this survey has yet to be completed. A re-survey of animal population levels has been undertaken during the summer of 1981/82. A survey of recreational use of the park is being undertaken during 1982. If on the basis of these survey reports management changes are necessary, these will be effected in accordance with Section 27 and 28 of the Wild Animal Act 1977. Major changes will require revision of this plan, subject to public comment.

2.5 Wild Animals

The area contains sika and red deer. Sika deer have been present since 1905, but it is not known exactly when red deer entered the area. There is little information on the number and distribution of either species, but it is considered that deer are present in moderate numbers and that sika deer predominate. The central North Island area is the only place in the southern hemisphere where sika deer occur. Sika are keenly sought as trophy animals, but Kaimanawa red deer are not renowned for producing trophy heads.

Possums are present throughout the area and the population level is considered to be low to moderate.

Wild pigs are present in very low numbers generally in localised pockets around the forest margins.

2.6 Access

The most commonly used access at present is Clements Road which enters the Recreational Hunting Area 12 km south of the Taupo-Napier Highway and extends for a further 18 km into the forest park.

The southern part of the area is accessible by air, mainly via Boyd airstrip, which is controlled by the Forest Service. There are also

airstrips at Tapapa (near Oamaru Hut) and in the Te Wai o Tupuritia Valley, but these are privately owned.

The lower Oamaru Valley can also be reached on foot via a marked route through Poronui Station.

Helicopter access is permitted to Boyd, Oamaru and Cascade hut sites. All these huts are linked by a walking track system within the area.

2.7 Huts

Four Forest Service huts serve the area. Te Iringa and Cascade huts each accommodate six, Oamaru hut 12, and Boyd Lodge, which is outside the recreational hunting area, can accommodate 16 people.

3.0 KAIMANAWA FOREST PARK MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Recreational Hunting Area lies entirely within Kaimanawa Forest Park and is subject to the provisions of its Management Plan whose objectives are:

1. "To minimise soil erosion and regulate stream flow by the conservation or renewal of the vegetation cover throughout the forest park.
2. To preserve and protect, primarily for scientific purposes, certain areas which are representative or unique examples of the natural ecosystems within the park.
3. To conserve the historical, cultural and scenic values of the park.
4. To develop recreational use of the park in a manner compatible with other park values.

5. To manage the indigenous forest in selected areas for long term indigenous production in a manner compatible with the objectives of conservation of soil and water, amenity, recreation and scientific values.
6. To manage existing exotic forest within the park for production purposes, integrated with the management of Lake Taupo Forest."

3.1 Zoning

To facilitate planning and management, the forest park has been zoned into various management zones, some of which overlap. See appended map.

The whole of the Recreational Hunting Area has a secondary recreation management designation "natural environment", i.e., it will be maintained predominantly in its natural state.

3.2 Protection Zones

Most of the Recreational Hunting Area has a primary zonation of 'protection', i.e., the prime requirement for maintenance of soil stability and water conservation takes precedence over all other uses.

The utilisation of forest produce is not permitted within the lowland protection zone.

The upland protection zone contains forest which is in unsatisfactory condition due to excessive deer use. It is probable that survey findings will determine that more intensive deer control will be necessary in this zone.

3.3 Amenity Zone

An amenity zone borders the length of Clements Road and extends about 200 m either side of the road and along adjacent tracks. Picnic and camping areas will be developed at selected sites.

3.4 Production Zone

About 2700 ha of red beech/silver beech forest is zoned long term indigenous forest management. It lies mainly to the north of Clements Road. There are no specific plans for utilisation of this area at present.

4.0 PUBLIC USE

4.1 Use of Kaimanawa Forest Park

(a) Hunting Permit Statistics

Each year about 5000 hunter permits are issued for Kaimanawa Forest Park. Although permittees are requested to send in the kill return attached to the permit, only about one quarter of permittees do so. Deer kills noted from this source are about 700 per year.

Table 1 : Hunting Permits

Year ending 31 March	Number of hunter permits	% Kill returns	Deer kills
1979	4984	16	542
1980	5291	22	760
1981	4551	35	807
1982	<u>4942</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>965</u>
Annual Mean	<u>4941</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>768</u>

Information from permit returns shows that April is the most popular month (17% of permits) followed by November (11%), December and January (9% each).

Most hunters using Kaimanawa Forest Park come from Taupo and northwards.

Table 2 : Number of Hunters From
Various Places in 1979

Auckland	1310
Waikato & Bay of Plenty	1101
Taupo	968
Wellington & Manawatu	855
Turangi	707
Other	287

(b) Hut User Statistics

The five huts in Kaimanawa Forest Park are used at the rate of about 3000 man nights per year. Some overnight hut users do not fill in the visitor book, and many people camp away from huts. Boyd Lodge is the most frequently used hut.

Table 3 : Summary of Hut Use 1978-82 Inclusive

	Bunks	Average man-nights per year		
		1978-80	1981	1982
Te Iringa	6	350	360	336
Cascade	6	462	848	590
Oamaru	12	689	847	1034
Boyd Lodge	16	947	1167	1042
Waipakihi	12	569	525	750

Within Kaimanawa Forest Park hunting and tramping are the main recreational uses. Oamaru hut and Boyd Lodge are often used by fishermen.

During the year ended 31 March 1982, at least 66 fixed wing flights were made to Boyd airstrip, landing over 258 visitors. In addition, at least 16 helicopter flights were made to hut sites, with about 27 visitors.

Lakeland Aviation Ltd advise that during 1980 they landed 288 people at Tapapa airstrip, for which they hold sole landing rights. Of these, 83 headed into Kaimanawa Forest Park; the balance comprised rafting parties or hunters going into Maori land.

4.2 Public Use of the Recreational Hunting Area

It is considered that more than half of the 5000 or so permitted hunters each year use the recreational hunting area. Current aerial permit conditions applying to the use of Boyd airstrip, and to helicopter landing sites, prohibit the transport of deer carcasses in saleable condition as defined in Regulation 83 of the Game Regulations 1975.

Hunters are sometimes known to fly out carcasses for sale from Tapapa and Te Wai o Tupuritia airstrips which are on Maori land adjacent to the proposed Recreational Hunting Area.

Over 30 vehicles per day have been counted along Clements Road during high use periods. Vehicle counts made on 11 occasions during holiday periods in the last 12 months ranged from five to 34, and averaged 18.

Hunting is the most popular activity in the Recreational Hunting Area. Tramping parties use the tracks, particularly the route from Clements Road to Boyd Lodge via Te Iringa and Oamaru.

Fishing is popular in the Mohaka, Oamaru and Kaipo Rivers.

Camping and day visitor activities such as picnicking and sightseeing are increasing in the Clements Road locality.

The area is used for various commercial activities. Permits are issued to trap and poison possums on 18 blocks within the proposed recreational hunting area. Venture Treks Ltd have a concession to operate guided walking holidays within the Oamaru Valley. On adjacent land Kaimanawa

Tours and Treks Ltd operate guided rafting trips down the Mohaka River, from the airstrip near Oamaru Hut, and another company operates camping holidays on the Maori land in the Oamaru Valley. There is unauthorised helicopter hunting in the area, and endeavours will be made to apprehend and prosecute offenders.

5.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR RECREATIONAL HUNTING AREA STATUS

The habitat of sika deer has been specifically selected for Recreational Hunting Area status, for sika are found only in the central North Island of New Zealand within the Southern Hemisphere, and are a species whose wariness, antler form and coat characteristics make it keenly sought as a trophy animal.

While the forest's composition and structure have been modified by browsing animals, and in parts there is inadequate regeneration to rapidly replace the forest canopy should it be extensively damaged, the provision of Recreational Hunting Area status allows for official animal control to complement that of recreational hunting when necessary. Because of the historic sport hunting activity in the area and public support for the provision of Recreational Hunting Area status to an area encompassing sika deer habitat within Kaimanawa Forest Park, dedication has been enacted for the described area. Red deer occur in the area and are embraced by the provisions of Recreational Hunting status so as to ease administration of its legal requirements. As the wild pig population is small, localised, not of notable sport interest locally and carcass and meat is easily distinguishable from venison, wild pig do not warrant recreational hunting status. Because of their minimal sport hunting and high commercial value possums similarly do not warrant Recreational Hunting status.

The boundaries of the Recreational Hunting Area have been selected to ensure efficient administration of a recognised Sika deer habitat and to facilitate the protective management of aesthetic and scientific values in adjoining areas of the forest park.

6.0 MANAGEMENT OF THE RECREATIONAL HUNTING AREA

6.1 Definition

Under the Wild Animals Control Act 1977 the Director-General of Forests may declare an area of land on which wild animals are present as a Recreational Hunting Area. In these areas hunting as a means of recreation is to be used to control (though not exclusively) wild animals defined within the Act.

Within the Kaimanawa Recreational Hunting Area the commercial hunting of sika and red deer for sale is prohibited. The killing of possums or wild pigs for pecuniary gain may be permitted.

6.2 Management Objectives for Wild Animal Control

Within the provisions of the Kaimanawa SFP Management Plan it shall be the objective of Recreational Hunting Area Management:

1. To control sika and red deer, wild pig and possum to population levels commensurate with the conservation of soil and water values and the retention of a forest structure conducive to its perpetuation.
2. By the promotion of the area and of recreational hunting usage attempt recreational hunter control of sika and red deer.
3. Should re-survey findings or other information determine that more intensive control of sika and red deer are required, and that control cannot be effected by the promotion of recreation hunting, it shall be effected by the Forest Service, using if necessary commercial operators under its supervision.
4. To effect further control of wild pig, if necessary, by encouragement and provision of information to recreational hunters.
5. To maintain control of possums by the encouragement of reliable permitted commercial operators and if necessary to achieve more intensive control, by undertaking aerial 1080 poisoning operations.

6.3 Management Options

The area has been managed primarily for sport hunters for the past two decades. Because of the sparcity of huts and the limited road access it is not proposed to subdivide the area into hunting blocks but to continue with the system of a blanket permit. Specific hunting permits will be required for the Recreational Hunting Area to meet its legal requirements and to determine recreational hunter use of that part of the park. Permit authority will also be required for hunting in the balance of Kaimanawa and/or Kaweka Forest Parks.

6.4 Permits

Hunters will be required to be individually named on hunting permits.

Permits will be issued at Kaimanawa Forest Park HQ in Turangi, and Taupo District Office of the N.Z. Forest Service between 8.00 am and 4.30 pm on weekdays, or by written or telephone application to those centres.

The permit will allow the hunter to operate anywhere in the Recreational Hunting Area. Permits will be issued for the expected period of the visit up to a maximum of 30 days.

One dog per permittee will be allowed and its physical description, registry authority and number will be recorded on the hunting permit. Permittees who lose their dog are required to immediately advise the Officer in Charge, Kaimanawa Forest Park. Stray dogs constitute a threat to adjacent farm stock, to Blue Mountain ducks and ground birds. If a dog is not recovered within 48 hours it may be destroyed.

A new permit form specific to Kaimanawa Recreational Hunting Area will be devised and printed.

6.5 Forest Service Animal Control

It has already been noted that some of the upland protection forests in the area are assessed to be in unsatisfactory condition due to excessive modification. More intensive animal control may be necessary in these and other areas, particularly by effecting a reduction of deer numbers.

6.6 Monitoring Vegetation Changes

A vegetation survey was conducted in 1978/79. The most appropriate remeasurement interval is six or nine years (to tie in with three-yearly animal population surveys). Because there are some areas in a degraded condition in the recreational hunting area and elsewhere in the forest park the next resurvey will be mounted as soon as possible.

Paired plots will be established and measured in areas where excessive animal use is suspected, to more clearly assess and demonstrate the effect of deer browse. One plot of each pair will be fenced to keep deer out, and the vegetation response in each plot will be monitored at about three-yearly intervals.

6.7 Monitoring Animal Population Changes

Animal population surveys will be conducted at three-yearly intervals commencing in 1981/82. Additional specific studies may be mounted if necessary. The assistance of recreational hunters may be sought.

6.8 Monitoring Public Use

As part of the forest park annual report, summaries will be made of the number of:

- Hunting permits issued
- Kill returns
- Possum hunting permits and kill returns

- People using huts
- Fixed wing and helicopter flights into the park
- Vehicles using Clements Road

7.0 ADMINISTRATION

7.1 Permits

Hunting permits are the key to animal control by recreational hunters. The permittee should receive a helpful and courteous service and the permit should be attractive and useful.

Present permits are issued by clerical staff in two separate offices. For public convenience this will continue and the information provided with permits improved.

7.2 Staff

At present Kaimanawa Forest Park is managed by two forest rangers, one trainee, one woodsman and two wage workers. Technical and clerical assistance is provided from Napier District Office and from Rotorua Conservancy offices in Taupo and Turangi.

Implementation of this control plan will require:

- Establishment of a ranger station at Clement Road
- Issuing an increased number of hunting permits
- Regular policing of access points
- Increased and more effective data collection and analysis
- Improvements in permit issue and hunter guidance
- Additional staff

7.3 Development

The main access to the Recreational Hunting Area is Clements Road. This is 90 km from forest park headquarters. To provide a suitable service to the public and to facilitate administration of the Recreational Hunting Area and the public generally, a base with office and accommodation will be established at Clements Road and manned at periods of high park usage.

7.4 Revision of this Plan

This control plan will be revised in 1987.

REFERENCES

- | | | |
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