

East Harbour Regional Park - Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui

Legal status

REGIONAL PARK/FOREST	TITLE HELD BY	LEGISLATIVE STATUS
East Harbour Regional Park – Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui	Wellington Regional Council	Scenic Reserve 1(a) 284.6 hectares
	Crown – Department of Conservation (land vested in Wellington Regional Council)	Currently Recreation Reserve, propose change to Historic Reserve 10.6 hectares

Territorial Authority: Hutt City Council

Note that there are three other titles located within, but separate to, the Park: a section of private property, the maritime reserve (where the lighthouse and NIWA buildings are situated) and a reserve used for police purposes.

Part of the property in the vicinity of the Wainuiomata River mouth is subject to a Crown Grant issued to Winstones Aggregates. The Grant authorises Winstones to extract minerals (river gravels and sand) and is for a fixed 100 year term starting from February 1985. To date no extraction has occurred on the land. Greater Wellington has formally approached Winstones asking it to consider the surrender of the Grant.

Background

Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui is a prominent headland located at the south-eastern edge of Te Whanganui-a-Tara (the Wellington Harbour). The area is recognised for its uplifted marine terraces, which create a sweeping landscape punctuated by the Baring Head lighthouse compound. The 295 hectares of reserve is home to a number of rare or threatened coastal plants as well as a grey scrub community growing on unstable rock faces. This seemingly barren landscape is home to a number of lizard species living on the scree slopes, various coastal birds nest on shingle beaches and native fish frequent the lower reaches of the Wainuiomata River.

Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui has been used by a number of iwi over time as a place for habitation, fishing and cultivation. When the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, Te Atiawa held manawhenua over the area. The block of land that encompasses Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui was awarded to Māori under the McCleverty Deeds of 1847 and it is likely that this area was used for grazing sheep. Some of the river flats were used by Māori for cultivation and were likely connected to Parangarehu Pa and adjacent wheat fields on the coast. In 1912, the Native

Land Court determined titles and certificates of title were issued for subdivision the following year. It is possible that by this time Pakeha farmers had already leased or bought the land from its Māori owners for sheep farming.

The lighthouse site was donated by Eric Riddiford, a local landowner and farmer. The lighthouse and nearby houses were built from 1933-34 and finally opened in 1935. It was New Zealand's first electric powered coastal lighthouse. Initially there were two keepers and then one from 1960 until 1989 when the lighthouse became fully automated. The homes and structures associated with keeping the lighthouse remain today.

The area was also used for military purposes. Prior to World War II, barracks and a fortress observation post were built on Para Hill (where the trig station is located). After the outbreak of war, additional accomodation was built close by. The lighthouse compound hosted a naval signal station and was staffed, at least in part, by the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps. This site was later used by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research for the installation of a meteorological station. The National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) now operates the station which has an internationally significant role in atmospheric sampling for greenhouse gas emissions.

In 1992, the recreation reserve where the lighthouse compound is located was vested in Greater Wellington and became part of East Harbour Regional Park. The surrounding land remained in private ownership until 2010 when it was purchased by Greater Wellington in 2010 with contributions from the Nature Heritage Fund, Department of Conservation, Hutt City Council and a private benefactor. In 2011, the land was gazetted Scenic Reserve.

The iwi authority for this area is the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, Taranaki Whanui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika. The mandated iwi fisheries organisation (MIO) - Te Atiawa ki to Upoko o te Ika a Maui Potiki Trust - also has an interest in the coastal marine area adjacent to Baring Head.

Key park characteristics

Land

- Geological features include raised beaches and a series of uplifted marine terraces and escarpments
- Grey scrub community and skink habitat
- Wainuiomata River lower reaches and salt water estuary
- The unique range of ecosystems which have not been fragmented

People

- Internationally important atmospheric sampling station operated by NIWA
- History of Māori occupation
- Lighthouse compound with associated buildings, adjacent to the lighthouse
- WWII Observation posts and barracks
- Rock climbing opportunities at Baring Head

Management focus

The focus for East Harbour Regional Park (Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui) is to:

1. Protect biodiversity, heritage, geology and landscape values
2. Provide for compatible passive recreation
3. Ensure that any developments do not compromise the atmospheric sampling work
4. Investigate options to reuse the lighthouse houses

Specific policies*Biodiversity and ecosystems*

- a. To restore Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui using plants sourced firstly from within the site and, if unavailable, from the nearest source of similar habitat type.
- b. To remove introduced flora and fauna where practicable and affordable except where:
 - Plants contribute to the historic values and setting of the lighthouse compound, and do not cause ecological damage
 - Pasture or similar vegetation is the best way to maintain the scenic, recreational, historic or cultural values of the site
 - Animals are the best management option for maintaining a setting (eg, grazing stock).
- c. To monitor the effects on key species (eg, rare and threatened plants or animals) to understand the effect of pest plant/animal control and removal of stock.

- d. Establish a monitoring programme of key biodiversity values to assess the effects after grazing has ceased. Retain the option to introduce grazing if it is found to be the most effective management tool to maintain these values.

Explanation: *The general approach is to remove stock from the area to protect the ecological values. While grazed areas tend to have lower pest animal numbers, grazing can also damage sensitive native plants and native fauna habitats. The cost to erect and maintain fencing to keep stock away from escarpments, beaches and the river is very high. The alternative is to focus on pest plant / animal control and monitor the effects over time. A review in 3 to 5 years will help to determine if a different land management policy is needed.*

Landscape and geological features

- e. To protect the park's key landscape features and values from inappropriate use and development. Specifically the:
- Two uplifted marine terraces (listed in Hutt City Council District Plan as a significant natural resource site)
 - Raised shingle beach.
- f. No new buildings or structures will be located on the marine terraces within the Scenic Reserve where these would affect the aesthetic value of the landscape, unless such structures are essential for the management of the area and cannot reasonably be located elsewhere.

Explanation: *The marine terraces are a key focal point when viewed from other areas (eg, Wellington City, the harbour entrance, flight paths) and also add to the sense of space and remoteness when visiting the area.*

Cultural heritage

- g. To manage key sites of cultural and heritage significance in the Park, which include:
- Parangarahu Pa, and the wheatfields to the north
 - Māori garden sites adjacent to the Wainuiomata River
 - Observation posts at Para Point
 - The lighthouse compound (which includes the gardens, shelterbelt and buildings)
 - Infrastructure related to the compound (bridge, road, old pump house and pipes).
- h. To develop a heritage conservation plan for the lighthouse compound which includes the possibility to reuse the lighthouse houses as visitor accommodation.
- i. To interpret the range of stories associated with Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui

- j. To work with Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, Taranaki Whanui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika to identify and interpret sites of value to Māori.

Explanation: Working with iwi is essential to ensure that sites are not affected when installing park infrastructure (fences, roading etc.). Where new sites are discovered, Greater Wellington's Accidental Discovery Protocol must be followed. Where damage is from natural changes or vandalism, iwi will be notified and agreement reached on any actions needed.

Land management

- k. To provide an easement for NIWA, NZ Police and the private property owner for them to access their facilities.
- l. To manage public access to the lighthouse compound in a way that takes into account the security needs of NIWA and NZ Police facilities.
- m. To restrict access to, or undertake removal of, structures that put public safety at risk (e.g., planned removal of the hazardous defunct radio mast).
- n. To maintain the existing roading network for restricted vehicle entry only. Restricted means, for management purposes, existing easements, Greater Wellington events and approved concessions.
- o. To ensure that Park operations and any proposed developments do not unduly interfere with atmospheric sampling. In particular, Greater Wellington will consult NIWA with regard to any potentially emitting activities at or near the lighthouse compound.

Visitor Services

- p. To maintain the following as secondary entrances to the Park:
- Vehicle Bridge
 - Wainuiomata River Mouth.
- q. To develop interpretation through partnership/sponsorship based on the main themes of Māori and early settler history, navigation (lighthouse keeping and ship wrecks), research, defence, geology and ecology.

Partnership in Parks

- r. To recognise the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, Taranaki Whanui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika relationship to East Harbour Regional Park through:
- Access for cultural harvesting
 - An approval process for the use or removal of natural materials for commercial activities / purposes

- Identifying and developing interpretation related to cultural sites
 - Protection and restoration of biodiversity values.
- s. To liaise with Hutt City Council and Department of Conservation regarding recreational linkages between open spaces areas and to ensure vehicles are limited to roads and car parks.
- t. To liaise with Hutt City Council, Historic Places Trust, NIWA and Police on the management and use of the lighthouse compound and associated buildings.
- u. To support the partnership with Friends of Baring Head Trust and MIRO in meeting the outcomes of this Plan.
- v. To work with Maritime New Zealand to provide visitors with access to the lighthouse tower periodically.
- w. To ensure that any new partnerships contribute to advocacy, restoration or educational outcomes for Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui.

AREA	DESCRIPTION	REASONS FOR SIGNIFICANCE
Baring Head / Ōrua-pouanui	Headland	Listed in Hutt City Council District Plan as significant natural resource site.
Coastal platform	Raised shingle beach and rock stacks	<p>The shingle beaches provide habitat for the coastal <i>Notoreas</i> moth (chronically threatened), variable oystercatcher, banded dotterel (nationally endangered) and Caspian tern (nationally threatened), katipo (chronically threatened), red admiral butterfly and Myers' cicada (At risk) as well as lizard species.</p> <p>Cushion plants and rare ecosystems of native sand binding plants are present as well as <i>Muehlenbeckia complexa</i> and mingi mingi at the toe of the scarp.</p>
Valley escarpment	Steep screes extending from the top of the marine terrace to the river flats.	<p>Contains grey scrub community (proposed conservation status of Serious Decline) dominated by Grey's groundsel (naturally uncommon), matagouri (regionally rare), <i>Clematis afoliata</i> and some mistletoes.</p> <p>High lizard numbers recorded including</p>

		<p>spotted skinks.</p> <p>Regenerated forest at the northern end included a grove of karaka trees.</p>
Coastal escarpment	The cliffs from the toe of the scarp to the marine terrace above	<p>Species present here are not found elsewhere on the property. Mainly divaricating shrubs such as mingimingi and pohuehue (<i>Muehlenbeckia complexa</i>) with flaxland dominating further up the slopes. Species recorded include <i>Pimelea carnosa</i> hybrid, tupata (<i>Coprosma repens</i>), speargrass (<i>Aciphylla squarrosa</i>) and species of fern.</p>
Wainuiomata River	Lower reaches of the river including a tidal estuary with gravel bar at the mouth.	<p>Listed as a Water of National Importance. It contains a number of native fish species: short and long finned eel, inanga, lamprey, common, giant and red fin bully and giant kokopu.</p> <p><i>Muehlenbeckia astonii</i> (nationally endangered) present.</p> <p>Grey duck (nationally threatened).</p> <p>Feeding & roosting site for various coastal birds e.g. Pied stilt, gulls, terns</p> <p>Previously recorded as a major nesting site for black-backed gulls.</p>

Projected changes

Where appropriate, these are represented on the Map of Projected Future Changes (Page 13)

1. Repair boundary fences to be stock proof
2. Remove stock from the park and monitor the effects of removal on key species (refer Policies b. and c.)
3. Prepare a biodiversity area management plan for sites in the park with high biodiversity value (coastal lagoon, scarp, dunes-shingle beaches, wetlands)
4. Prepare a species list, including recording key species for seed collection and propagation, for restoration projects in the park.

5. Improve safety and signage on the internal road (beyond the vehicle bridge) to allow for shared pedestrian/cycle/vehicle use
6. Replace the vehicle bridge when necessary for safety
7. Formalise tracks and make some suitable for multi-use (walking, cycles and horses). Investigate a new route from the climbing boulders to Baring Head lighthouse compound
8. Develop a car park at Wainuiomata River mouth to contain vehicles in this space and keep vehicles off the beaches
9. Allow for a small car park near the lighthouse compound and a link road to the existing internal road
10. Re-classify the reserve containing the lighthouse compound from Recreation Reserve to Historic Reserve
11. Allow for an interpretation centre/day use facility at the generator building for day use. Investigate a toilet at an appropriate location nearby
12. Work with tangata whenua, Hutt City Council and Historic Places Trust for appropriate recognition of key sites, including registration of the lighthouse compound
13. Work with tangata whenua to prepare a conservation plan for sites of significance
14. Restore the historic pump shed (a Friends of Baring Head project)
15. Retain the cottages, undertake minimal maintenance to prevent deterioration and preserve for possible future reuse, which takes heritage values into account
16. Prepare a heritage conservation plan for the lighthouse compound
17. Investigate installing foot/cycle bridge near Wainuiomata River mouth car park which links to track network

For more information:

Baring Head ecological values (Greater Wellington, June 2011)

Baring Head: Recreation and Tourism Options Study (Tourism Resource Consultants, March 2011)

Research Report on Heritage Features: Baring Head, Wellington (NZ Historic Places Trust, June 2011)

Orua-Poua-Nui: Baring Head – Cultural Values Report (Raukura Consultants, February 2011)

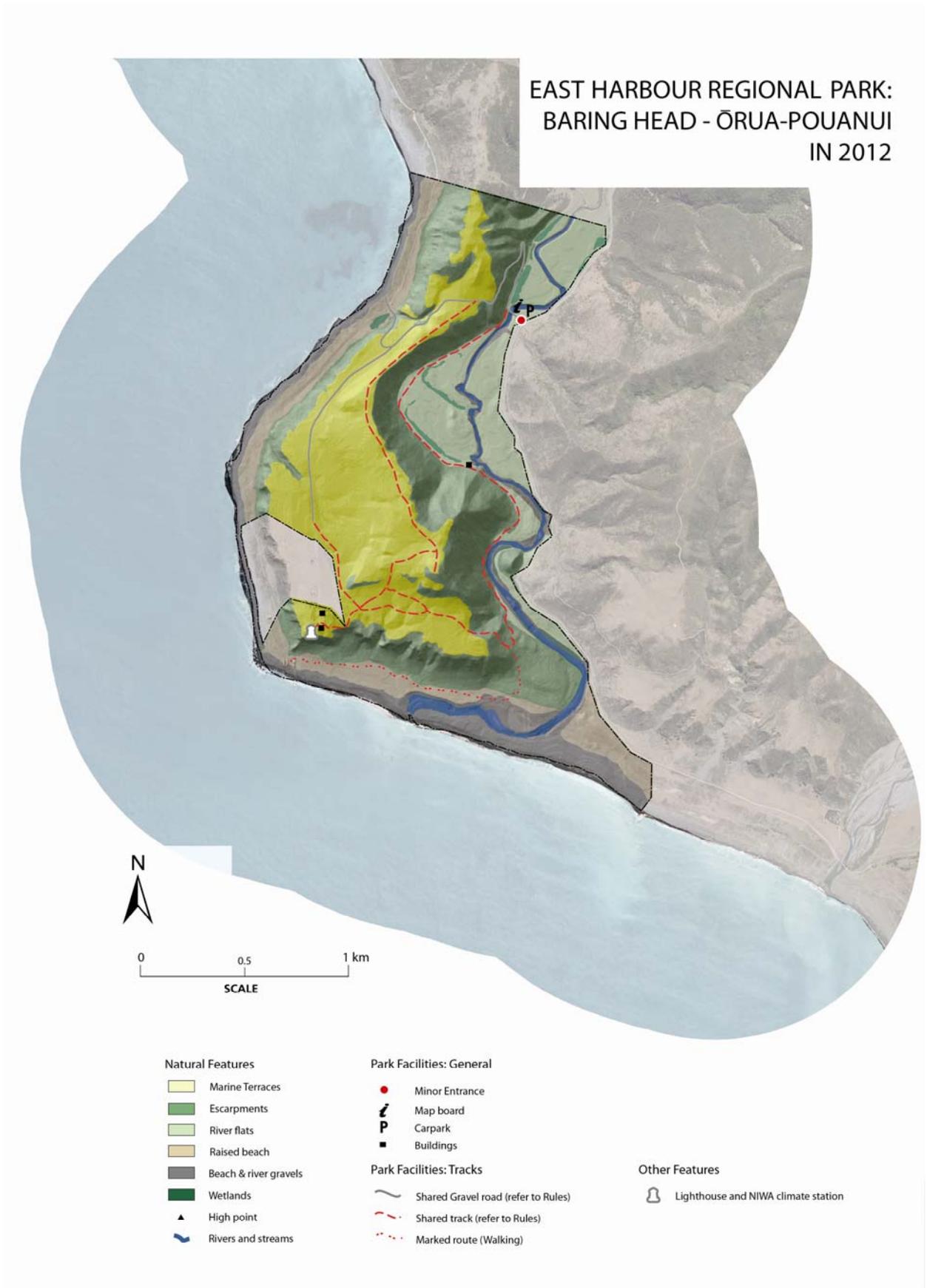
Rules applying to activities in the Baring Head/Ōrua-pouanui area of East Harbour Regional Parks & Forests*

*This table updates Table 9 from the Parks Network Plan, found in Chapter 7 Rules for use and development.

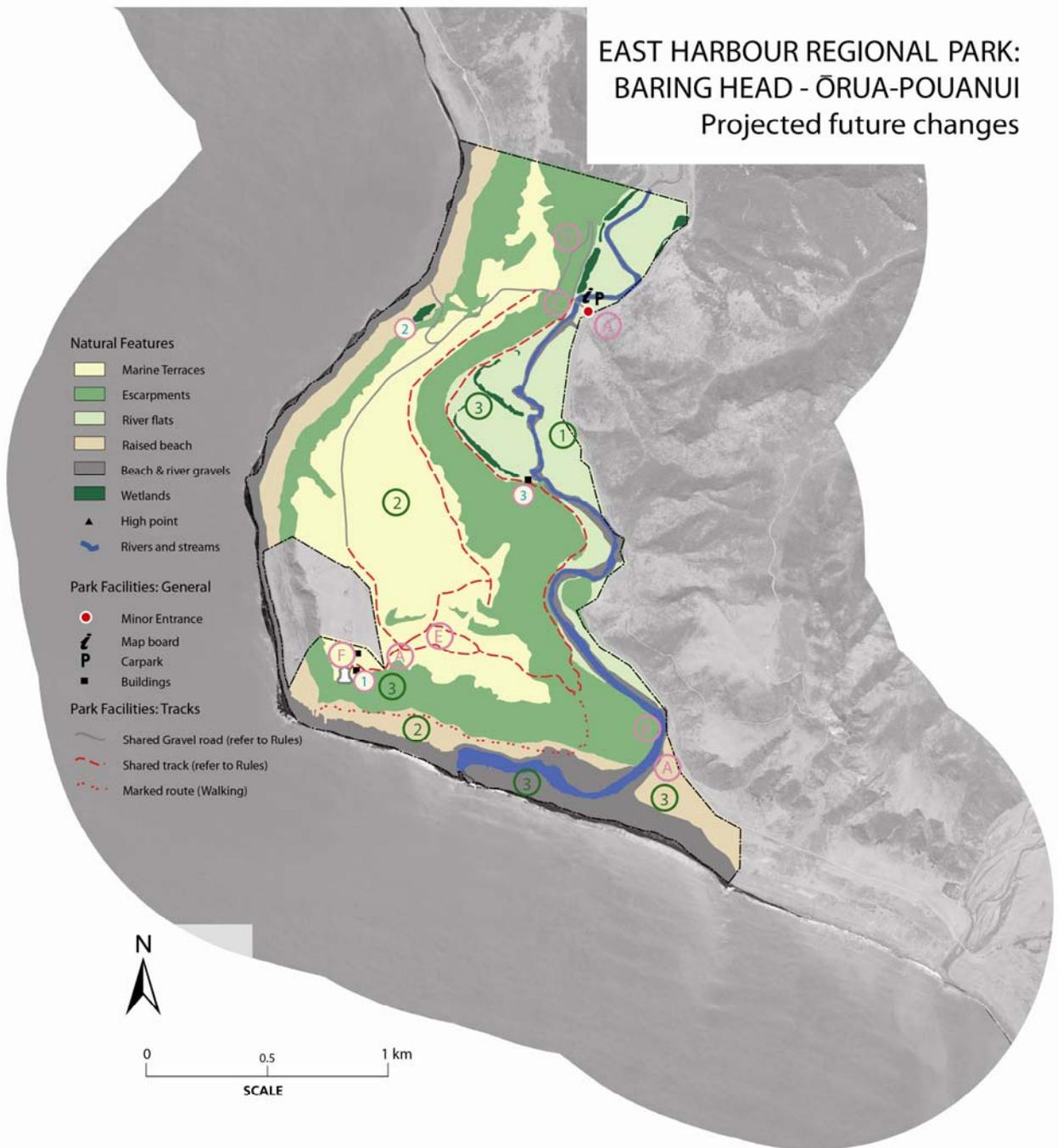
ACTIVITY CATEGORY: ✓ Allowed ○ Managed → Restricted ✘ Prohibited

ACTIVITY IN PARKS	Activity category	SPECIFIC RULES
Aircraft landings	→	
Animals, excluding dogs/horses	→	
Ashes – burial/spreading	✘	
Camping (designated sites)	✘	<i>Note: Camping is provided at Catchpool Conservation Campsite (administered by DOC).</i>
Camping (wilderness based)	✘	
Collecting natural materials	○	<i>Note: Greater Wellington administers a permit system which is run consultation with the local iwi</i>
Commercial activity	→	
Dog walking	✓	<i>On marked inland trails only. Dogs prohibited on the coastal areas (rocky coast, shingle beaches and dunes) to protect coastal birds.</i>
Events (commercial, or larger than 30 people)	→	
Filming (commercial)	→	
Firearms (refer also to Hunting)	✘	<i>Note: No hunting other than for management purposes will be undertaken on the property</i>
Fires (open)	✘	
Fireworks	✘	

Fishing	✓	
Hang gliding / parapenting	→	
Horse riding	○	<i>Riders require a key to access the area and must follow designated tracks. Due to safety reason, no horses allowed on the road ascending from/descending to the vehicle bridge.</i>
Hunting	✘	<i>Note: No shooting (including gamebirds) is permitted due to safety concerns for public visiting the park.</i>
Informal games	✓	
Lease/licence	→	<i>Note: This area is subject to requirements of the Reserves Act 1977 for any applications for a lease or licence.</i>
Motorised recreation (Cat A: club/casual)	✘	<i>There is restricted vehicle travel only (Refer to Policy m.) on roads within the park.</i>
Motorised recreation (Cat B: special events)	✘	<i>Due to the sensitive ecology and landscape there are no opportunities for off road access.</i>
Mountain biking	✓	
Picnicking	✓	
Swimming	✓	
Walking, tramping, running	✓	



EAST HARBOUR REGIONAL PARK:
 BARING HEAD - ŌRUA-POUANUI
 Projected future changes



- Recreation**
- (A) Develop / allow for carparking
 - (B) Investigate a pedestrian / cycle bridge
 - (C) Replace vehicle bridge
 - (D) Improve road safety for shared use
 - (E) Make some tracks for multi-use
 - (F) Allow for a dayuse facility & provide minimal maintenance for Lighthouse keeper homes

- Ecology**
- (1) Make boundary fences stockproof
 - (2) Remove stock
 - (3) Prepare biodiversity Area Management Plans

- Heritage Projects**
- (1) Seek reclassification of reserve to 'Historic' and prepare heritage conservation plan
 - (2) Develop conservation plans of key sites with tangata whenua
 - (3) Historic pumpshed improvements