

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

Expression of Interest for use of facilities and new grazing activities

Information Document

September 2024



1. Summary

Greater Wellington is seeking expressions of interest for a range of new education and recreation related farming activities and uses of facilities at Battle Hill.

Activities and uses and policy directions supporting sustainable land care at the park are guided by our management plan for regional parks [Toitu Te Whenua Parks Network Plan 2020-30](#). The Plan identifies a range of actions for delivery opportunities to protect and enhance environmental values and park visitor experiences. See pages 89-97 for Battle Hill details. The Plan's vision is *'restoring healthy ecosystems for the benefit of people and nature'*.

This expression of interest (EOI) relates to delivering Plan directions to ***'Enhance and promote the park to make it a highly popular 'farm park' destination'***, and Action A128 to ***'Renew the focus of Battle Hill as a destination for visitors to see a range of farm animals and for learning with a recreation experience focused operating model'***.

We are looking for a range of new park uses of facilities and grazing areas, including different uses of smaller areas of the park. If you have an activity in mind that supports great park experiences, get in touch using our EOI form.

2. About the Park

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park (Battle Hill) is a 480-hectare regional park offering recreation activities including camping, picnic areas, walking, horse riding and eventing, mountain biking, conservation activities and nature play. The Friends of Battle Hill undertake conservation activities and have a small plant nursery. The park hosts several market and festival events.

Equestrian activities are key focus. It's a popular casual trail riding destination and there are three equestrian clubs/groups: Riding for Disabled (RDA), Battle Hill Eventing and Pāuatahanui Pony Club. RDA has a large indoor arena lease area and a grazing licence area.

Access to the park is currently primarily by vehicle but this is set to change with the proposed development of a new shared used walking, cycling horse riding trail along Paekākāriki Hill Road from Pāuatahanui village, extending through the park to Akatarawa Forest and the Kāpiti Coast.

The park's natural landscape features include extensive areas of wetland, regenerating native bush forest and Horokiri stream (with resident eels) and associated branches. The eastern hills of the park are commercial pine plantation forest with trails.

Mana whenua cultural values are significant at Battle Hill. Local iwi, Ngāti Toa Rangatira have enduring connections with the park and there are important archaeological sites. They support park restoration work in the park and across the catchment.

Ranger team work to support more enriching experiences includes improvements to support the small chicken flock, eel viewing area, amenity and restoration plantings, the development of a farming themed nature play space in the Dell area and a sensory garden near the homestead.



3. New uses and opportunities

Battle Hill is the only park in the regional parks network where the focus is on farming education related activities for park visitors, and we want to enhance this.

We welcome new uses and proposals which align with park values, are compatible with existing activities and help to enhance learning and recreation experiences at Battle Hill.

To ensure ongoing farming and grazing related activities and demonstrate good practices in environmental care and sustainability (Plan policies), Greater Wellington has undertaken an assessment of natural values and developed a plan for progressive changes.



This will see all the park wetlands, spring areas and steeper slopes protected, and the available grazing area reduced. This is planned to occur over the next five years, but it may take longer.

Approximately 85 hectares of land is available for low impact, sustainable farming activities which support public enjoyment and experiences. Over this time fences will change to enable progressive restoration and rehabilitation of these important natural areas and whole sub-catchments, and the grazing area available will reduce to approximately 34 hectares (see maps below). The woolshed and associated area are also available for possible adaptive reuses and new facility, or activity proposals will be considered provided they are compatible with park values.



4. The Woolshed, outbuildings and yards

The Woolshed has a classroom space on the upper level and accessible ramp. It's open to the lower area. The ground floor has been solely used for shearing, wool classing, crutching, drafting, and drenching activities. There are extensive yards outside and a cattle ramp and crush. Yards are sometimes used as horse holding yards for overnight camping. Outbuildings include two hay sheds and a workshop. Riding for Disabled (RDA) uses a bay within the hay shed for storage.

The Woolshed is under-utilized, and we are interested in new uses. It may be possible to shift stock related activities fully outside, or periodic use may be required. The lower area could potentially be partitioned or reconfigured. If sheep remain in the park, shearing could be undertaken using a mobile yard. The Woolshed roof offers a large water or solar panel collection area.

We are interested in exploring and considering options which enable more use and benefits from this facility for people coming to the park.

Adaptive reuses not related to farming will be considered if the proposal has high benefits for the park and visitors e.g. a café, wedding or events venue.



5. The Homestead and new buildings or services

The homestead and adjoining buildings are an operational park office and workshop. There is a small meeting room which could be expanded to enable it to be a bookable space. We may consider adaptive reuses of the homestead if the proposal is highly beneficial for the park.

New services could include a food truck base in the Dell car park and picnic area, bike hire, guided heritage walks or other activities.

We are open to proposals for **new facilities** for the park provided they are compatible with park values and beneficial for people visiting the park.



Types of agreements and terms for facilities or new uses

Agreement terms for new uses of the woolshed, homestead or new facilities or services depend on the proposal. Our standard application and permission processes identified in the management plan apply after this initial expression of interest. Proposals may require public notification. Longer-term leases for facility buildings will be considered if significant capital investment is required. Compatible grazing activities will be licences and subject to environmental care related conditions including a sustainable grazing plan. Greater Wellington uses licences or concession agreements for shorter term uses.

Expressions of interest should be made via our online form.

6. Low impact and sustainable grazing areas available

The following maps illustrate the grazing areas available and planned changes to support protection and restoration of wetlands, spring and steep slopes.

Initially, approximately 85 hectares are available for sustainable grazing activities. This will be reduced over five years to approximately 34 hectares as wetlands, steep slope and spring areas are progressively fenced and restored. The following maps illustrate the proposed changes over the next five years.

To practice sustainable land use and minimise erosion and sediment run off, Riding for Disabled horses are periodically moved off their main grazing paddocks to rest them in the winter. This means some paddocks are shared use some of the year as shown on the maps below.

The progressive reduction in grazed areas for restoration purposes will be undertaken in communication with new agreement holders and a Greater Wellington team including science and restoration officers.

Map 5 below has paddock numbers. If you have a small animal grazing activity but only wish to use a couple of paddocks, identify them from this map (after you have visited the park).

We are interested in a variety of compatible proposals.

Applicants can express interest in smaller areas for small scale farming activities or seasonal activities which support a positive visitor experience e.g. goats, donkeys, alpacas or llamas. Applicants should identify their paddock, fencing and other facility use needs in the online application form. Activities that are likely to attract visits and offer the public memorable and enjoyable experiences will be given first preference, before broader low intensity traditional sheep or beef applications.

Grazing areas available	Grazing licence ha	Winter/spring shared use with RDA horses – ha	Notes
R1 – 2024-2025	85.2	3.6	Calculated from paddocks 1b, 2, 3, 4, & 5. 2.1ha additional on Airfield, calculated from paddocks 1a & 1c
R2 - approx. 2026 -2028	56.4	3.6	
R3 – approx. 2029 & beyond	34.3	3.6	

Sustainable stocking to minimise impacts

- Stocking rates will vary depending on type of stock
- This will be discussed with applicants on a case-by-case basis
- A general farm environment plan will be made available to successful applicants

Other shared park uses

- There are equestrian pony club and eventing club events approximate 20 + days per year
- There are public events such as craft fairs approximately 10 days per year
- Stock must be moved on the day prior to large events from the Airfield, Abbotts Field and Lower Oak paddocks to facilitate these events, occurring approximately five times year).

Hay and silage

- The paddocks east of Transmission Gully may be used for hay or silage. This is a licence holder responsibility
- Note, cropping will be permitted.

Operating on the park

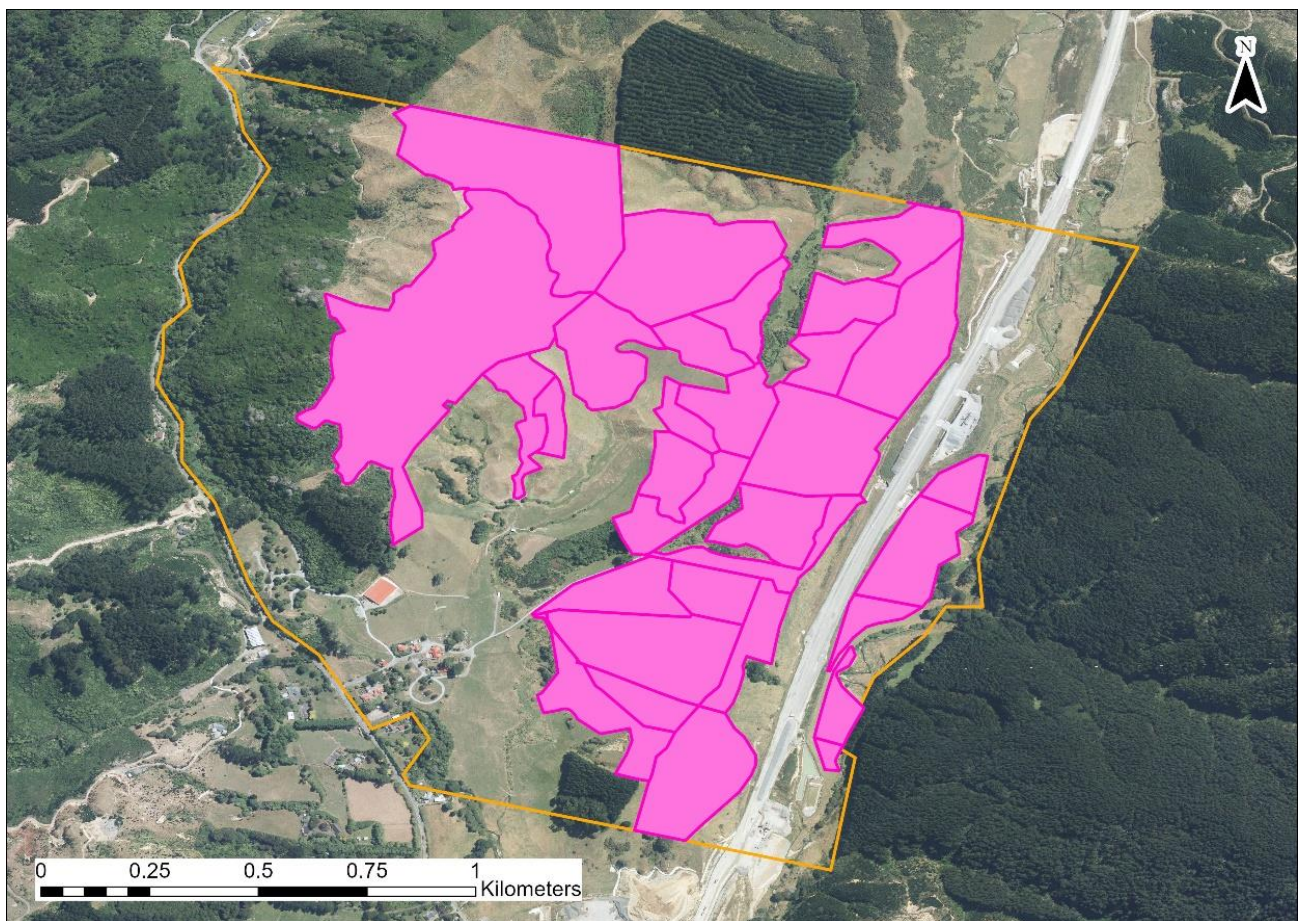
- A sustainable grazing plan template will be provided and developed in liaison with new agreement holders.
- The purpose of the expression of interest is to seek new activities which support park visitors' enjoyment and learning about sustainable land management and farming activities. Applicants need to be aware that operating on the park is very different to private land.
- There is a high level of public interest and observation of activities so for example, any issues with stock must be attended to very promptly.
- A high standard of care for stock management, respect for public access and activities is required.
- A high level of professionalism is required and knowledge of good contemporary land care practices.
- Successful applicants are expected to make themselves aware of Greater Wellington management plan directions and other applicable land use rules and regulations.
- A Battle Hill Information Pack about important natural values will be provided.

Possible grazing licence terms

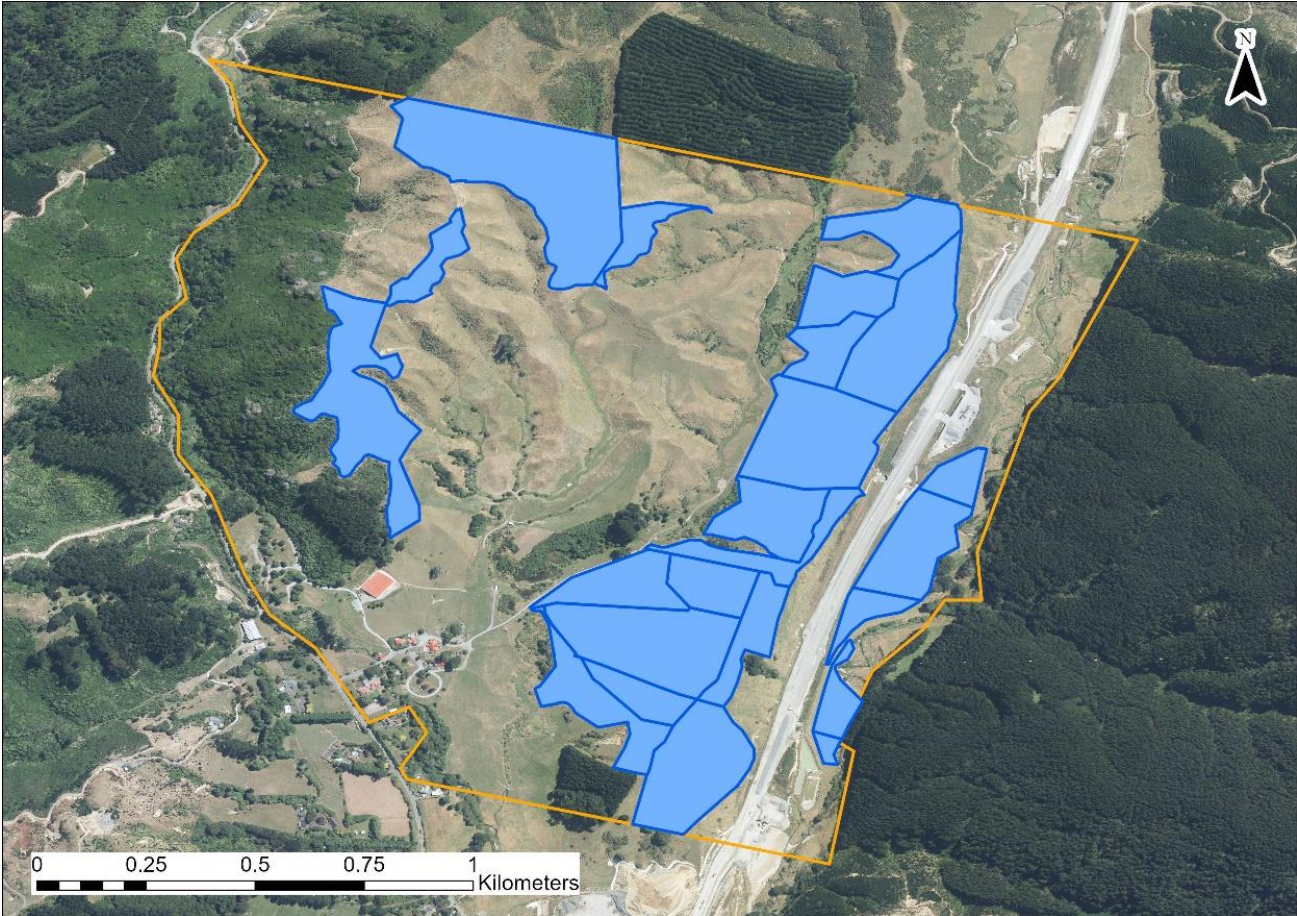
The grazing licence term will depend on the proposal, its fit with the park and public benefits, applicants' ability to demonstrate and walk the talk of good environmental care. Performance once operating will be monitored.

Given the progressive park restoration work, the licence term may be linked to the reduction in grazing area available e.g. an initial term of two years, with extensions by further two-year increments or negotiation, with a right of first refusal and exit clauses.

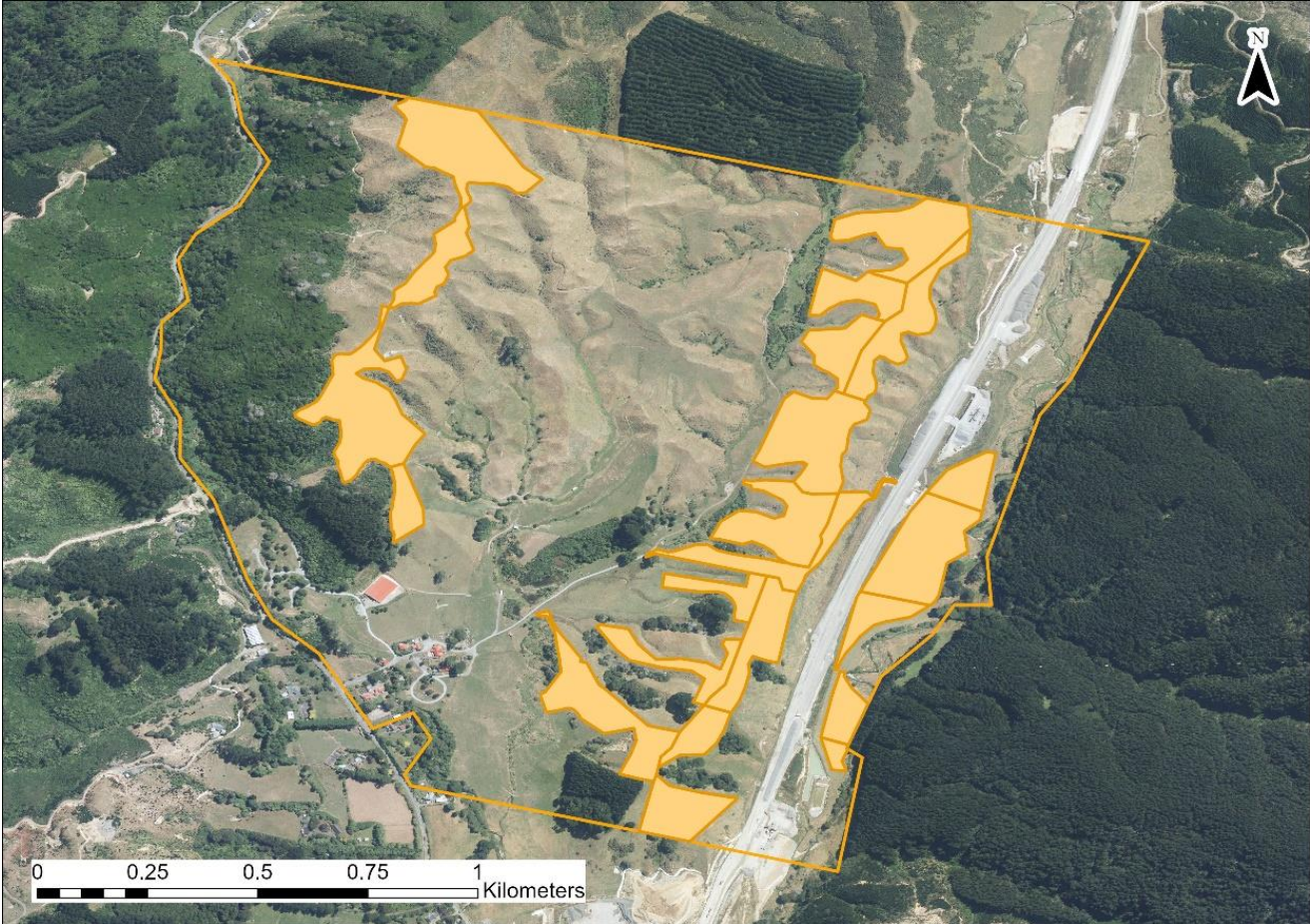
Map 1. R1. Grazing area available in Restoration Phase 1 – approx. 2024-2025



Map 2. R2. Grazing area available in Restoration Phase 2 approx. 2026-2028



Map 3. R3. Grazing area available in Restoration Phase 3 approx. 2029 and beyond



7. Possible suitable animals and compatible uses

We are looking for low impact animals that are appealing and interesting to park visitors to support memorable park experiences.

Compatible low impact activities and animals

- Small scale farming activities which support enjoyable and educational park visitor experiences
- Miniature Nigerian goats
- Alpaca, llama
- Donkeys, miniature horses
- Sheep – including rare breeds. Lambing only in limited numbers and area away from main public use areas
- Agricultural education demonstrations e.g. bringing stock in temporarily
- Pigs – particularly small breeds e.g. kune kune
- Lighter breeds of cattle such as Dexter, Highland and Lowline

Possible activities and animals

- Outpost greenfield/ open range areas of the park to supporting other facilities in the region
- Milking goats
- Limited number of milking cows in barn as demonstrations
- Periodic short-term calves
- Other animals by discussion and agreement

Incompatible animals or activities

- Deer
- Breeding cattle/cows
- Bulls
- New horse and pony grazing (except miniature horses)
- Sheep that shed naturally e.g. Wiltshire
- Introduced pest animal species e.g. ducks, possums, wallabies
- Birds in aviary (unless wildlife hospital service)

8. Things to note

Public access and planned activities

- Public access is the priority in all areas of the park.
- Seasonal Park closures for lambing and calving will not be permitted.
- Commercial pine plantation forest harvesting East of the motorway is in progress. Trails are expected to re-open for recreation use in late 2026. The paddocks here are not affected by these operations.
- The two other small pine lots in the main park area will be restored in native vegetation after harvest.

Protecting and enhancing park values

- The parks have extensive wetland areas and important stream habitat. There are also important archaeological sites for licence holders to be aware and respectful of in land care and stock management practices.
- Restoration plantings occur every planting season and eventually whole sub-catchments will be restored.
- All the wetlands of the park have been mapped and a riparian setback of at least fifteen metres is required to support restoration of these ecosystems. By Phase Three (R3 map below) of restoration all wetlands will be protected from grazing impacts.
- Any new licensees are expected to have good knowledge and understanding of highly sustainable land care practices and develop this knowledge further to support interactions with park visitors. Applicants are expected to be able to demonstrate how they have applied genuinely sustainable land care practices. This will be considered in decision making about new activities and applicants.
- You can read more about the park and restoration work here: [Greater Wellington — Battle Hill Farm Forest Park \(gw.govt.nz\)](https://www.gw.govt.nz/battle-hill-farm-forest-park) and details about the parks restoration programme, 'Recloaking Papatuanuku' here: [Greater Wellington — Recloaking Papatūānuku \(Recloaking Mother Earth\) \(gw.govt.nz\)](https://www.gw.govt.nz/recloaking-papatuanuku)

Grazing, soil and stock management

- A sustainable grazing plan template will be provided and developed in liaison with new agreement holders.
- Sensible use of some fertilizers will be permitted but waterways must be protected. A grazing licence holder will be responsible for soil testing, but Greater Wellington will be responsible for the application of any fertilizers used.
- Agricultural herbicides and pesticides are permitted, but cannot be stored at the park.

- Stock management is the full licence holder responsibility. Sick/dead stock must be removed within 12 hours.
- For public health and safety, no unruly stock is permitted.
- 4x4 or LUV vehicles may be used.
- Dogs are permitted for stock management purposes only.

Fences

- Greater Wellington will be responsible for overall fencing removal and changes over the next five years as wetlands and steep slope areas are progressively retired from grazing.
- Changes to fences, other than those identified on the maps below, is by negotiation and supported where benefits for park visitor experiences are likely to be significant.
- Additional fencing to create smaller paddocks, for example to support small animal experiences, may be possible and will be by negotiation.
- The internal fences in the park are in reasonable condition, however fence maintenance is ongoing work. Where no changes to fences are planned, Greater Wellington will upgrade fences which are currently sub-standard.
- Licence holders will be responsible for maintenance of existing internal paddock fences and repairs from stock damage for the term of the agreement.
- Greater Wellington will supply fencing materials required for repairs (except electric fences).
- Electric fences are permitted but their location and use must consider public safety, access and freedom of movement on trails.

Water supply

- Greater Wellington is the process of increasing the stock water reticulation throughout the park and adding eight new troughs.
- Greater Wellington will maintain:
 - springs and bore water supply infrastructure
 - spraying weeds
 - replacements and removal of fences as per the restoration plans (maps here).
- New services and maintenance to troughs in paddocks is a licensee responsibility.

Other requirements

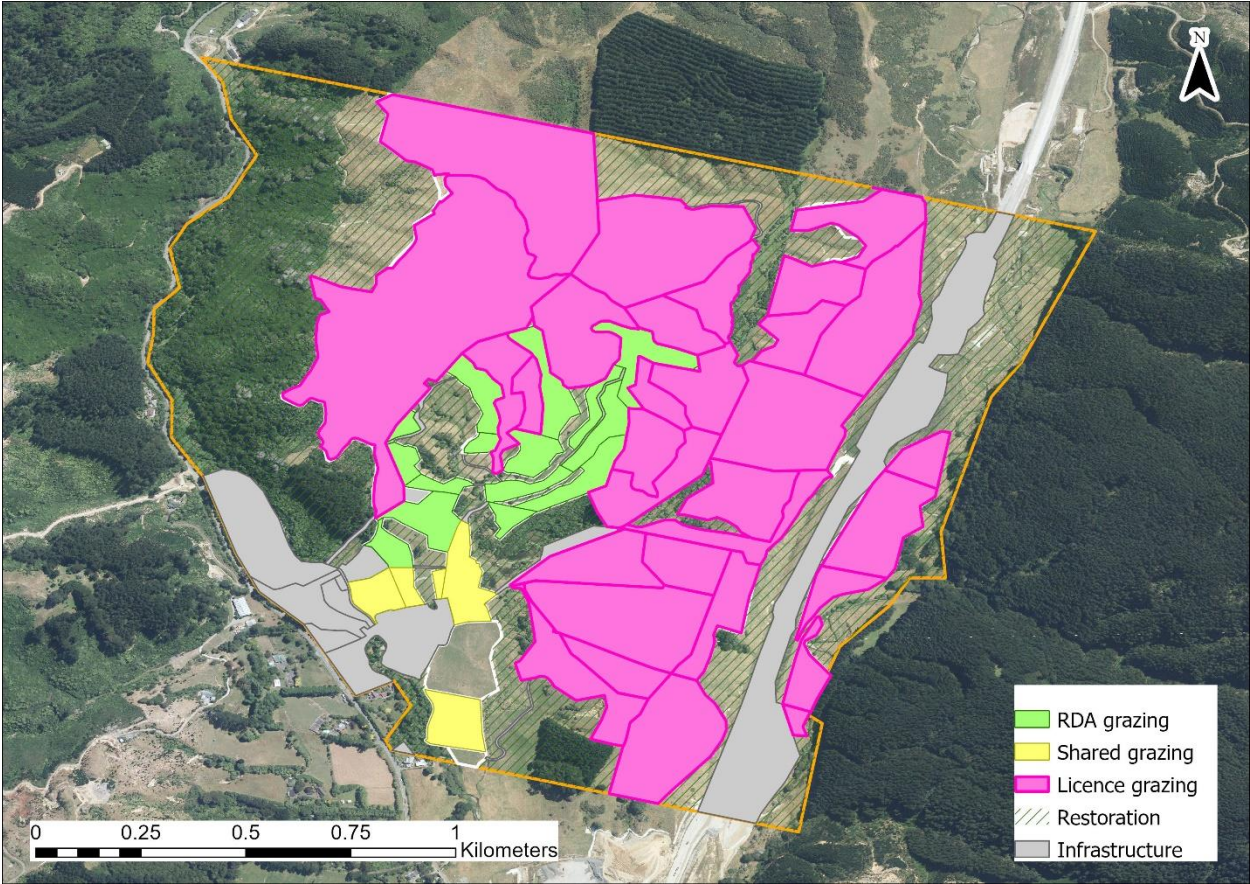
- Successful proposals will be responsible for their own insurances, equipment, stock and must become familiar and comply with Greater Wellington standard operating procedures for health and safety, seasonal fire threat management etc.

Park Map 5. Overall Park longer term paddock map* for identification purposes

*Note this the projected long term restoration map and it may change



Park Map 6. RDA grazing licence area and shared seasonal grazing areas



9. Questions and answers

I have another idea. What other activities will be considered?

Check the Management Plan, Section 8.

Unacceptable activities are identified as 'Prohibited' and applications are not accepted.

In addition to the information above, other activities permitted in the park and rules for use and development are identified in the management plan for regional parks which includes [Toitu Te Whenua Parks Network Plan 2020-30 \(Toitu Te Whenua\)](#) identifies overarching park values, policies, rules and actions for improvement work for the whole park.

Can I inspect the park facilities and proposed grazing areas?

Yes, the open space areas of the park are always open so you can visit anytime. If you wish to have a guided walk and discussion, please get in touch. Depending on interest we may have set times available over a day.

If you would like to inspect inside the woolshed, please get in touch with the Park Ranger. Email battlehillranger@gw.govt.nz

What is the Expression of Interest and application process?

Step 1.

If you have a proposal for an activity that you think is compatible with park values, complete our Expression of Interest form online or download and email a PDF version to parksplanning@gw.govt.nz to express your interest.

The form has questions about proposed activities and compatibility with park values.

Step 2.

Proposals will be assessed after the Expression of Interest end date. If we have questions we will contact applicants directly for more information.

Our criteria for consideration of proposals are:

- Fit with Toitū Te Whenua Parks Network Plan Management Plan directions for the park and park values
- Benefits for public recreation uses and experiences

- Compatibility with existing park activities, and other applications
- Protection of natural and cultural values & possible impact (lower impact activities will be prioritised over higher impact)
- Collaborations/partnership benefits in support of park values
- Level of park management support required/fit with park operations
- Demonstrated sustainable land care knowledge and past practices
- Experience in operating with the public or on public land.

Short listed proposals:

- Face to face meetings will be required
- References may be requested

The application form has more details. The selection criteria above are based on Appendix Three of the management plan. The assessment panel will include Greater Wellington officers from a range of teams including restoration, science, planning, parks and catchment.

Step 3.

The type of permission agreement developed in the third step depends on the nature of the proposal. Activities or proposals deemed to be the most appropriate uses will be notified and invited to meet with Greater Wellington officers to discuss proposals further.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified with a rationale included within one month.

Managed activities follow the Concession Application Process. This requires another online form to be submitted, and then a Concession Agreement can be drafted. This can be a relatively short process, approximately one month, if the proposal is low impact and high park benefit. Details here: [Greater Wellington — Concession applications \(gw.govt.nz\)](http://www.gw.govt.nz/concessions)

Restricted activity applications will either require our short or long form to be completed depending on the application. Extensive work has already been undertaken to map natural values, but our AEE short form may need to be completed too. Public notification may be required. There is a summary here: [Restricted-Activity-process-summary.pdf \(gw.govt.nz\)](http://www.gw.govt.nz/restricted-activity-process-summary.pdf).

Fees

Licence and concession fees are variable and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Overall guidance about park fees is provided here: [FINAL-Greater-Wellington-Parks-Concession-Guideline-and-Fee-schedule-2020.pdf \(gw.govt.nz\)](#)

Can Greater Wellington assist in supporting new activities at Battle Hill?

Yes possibly. Greater Wellington:

- *may* support new building facilities
- *may* share costs of upgrading or adapting existing facilities
- *may* cover costs of creation of smaller paddocks for attractive small animals.

Successful applicants will be responsible for:

- compliance with agreement conditions
- if buildings are adaptively reused, any consents required from Porirua City Council
- ongoing maintenance of facilities used and internal fences.

I have more questions, who can I ask?

We welcome your questions. Please email parksplanning@gw.govt.nz or come along to an open day, if one is organised.

If you wish to discuss a proposal, contact the Greater Wellington Contact Centre - 0800 496 734.

Thank you for your interest in Battle Hill Farm Forest Park.