

There are two known translations of the name "Akatarawa" - "trailing vines" or "vine of the Tarawa". Maori used the forest for hunting and food gathering as well as an access trail between the Hutt Valley and Kapiti Coast.

The indigenous forest changed greatly following European settlement, through introducing animals, fires and, most significantly, logging native timber.

During 1900-1920 many families who were associated with logging and sawmilling moved into the Akatarawa area. Access was via Karapoti Road which was formed in 1911 as a tram track with wooden rails. Today you can still see old tram lines, trucks and discarded machinery in the forest.

In 1919 the State Forest Service acquired 2,228 acres and established Akatarawa State Forest No 26. Fourteen years later, this was vested in the Wellington City and Suburban Water Supply Board - a predecessor of Greater Wellington Regional Council (GW). Log and timber sales offset the cost of supplying water to the growing cities.

The forest has a long shared use with outdoor recreation. Trampers in 1948 used a logging access route along McChies Road to gain views over the forest-clad West Akatarawa River valley. Today GW still balances the needs of the forest as a future water supply area, a source of timber and a recreational wilderness for 4WD clubs, trail biking, tramping, hunting and mountain biking.

What can you do here?

Karapoti Gorge (3 hours return, easy) Starting from Karapoti Road, the track narrows through a bush-clad gorge to McChies Bridge and on to a clearing by the river. Enjoy a dip in one of several deep pools.

Cannon Point Walkway (3-4 hours, moderate) From Bridge Road, the track follows the pipeline to the historic Birchville Dam then up to Cannon Point, giving panoramic views of the Hutt Valley. Return via Tulsa Grove and along the banks of the Hutt River.

Whakatikei Loop (22 km return, 2-4 hours, medium) From the Maungakotukutuku Valley entrance this is a good climb to Titi Ridge via Fernham's Road. Descend through exotic forest to the Whakatikei River and return by Hydro Valley and Whakatikei Road to Titi Road.

History

Turn left onto Valley View Road just over the Totara Park Bridge and climb to Cannon Point Trig. Remain on Valley View Road then turn left on Airstrip Drive. Go right down Woished Road through pine plantations, then native forest down to McChies Bridge. Exit via Karapoti Gorge to Akatarawa Road.

All casual trail bikes must have individual permits available free from our Upper Hutt office. Do not exceed 30kph in the forest. Casual off-road racing, scrambling, motocross, and competitive riding are not permitted.

No trail biking is permitted in ecologically sensitive zones including the summits of Mounts Barton, Mananganui, Titi and Wainui, the upper Akatarawa Valley and riparian zones (rivers and stream margins), stream beds and wetlands.

Deer are found throughout Akatarawa Forest, mostly in heavy bush. Goats and pigs occur at low altitudes in more open country. Collect a map and permit to hunt in the designated indigenous forest from our Upper Hutt office.

Camping Wilderness camping is permitted but no camping facilities are provided.

Horse riding The best access points to the forest are via Maungakotukutuku Valley and Battle Hill Farm Forest Park. The Karapoti Gorge is heavily used by trail bikers so we do not recommend horse riding there.

4WD vehicles GW runs a permit system for 4WD clubs on designated tracks. For safety and environmental reasons, no private 4WD trips are allowed into the Akatarawa Forest.

Ranger service The Akatarawa Forest has a 5-day ranger service, including most weekends. To discuss forest events, vehicle access and horse riding please contact the ranger.



Caring for your forest

- Pack in and pack out. Take your rubbish home and recycle it where possible.
- Do not remove, disturb or damage native plants or animals
- Light no fires. You may bring a portable gas stove
- Keep your dog under control at all times.
- Bury toilet waste away from streams and rivers.
- Poison may be laid in the forest to control possums. Do not remove any warning notice, or disturb baits, lures or carcasses.

Akatarawa Forest



Water, air, earth and energy: elements in Greater Wellington's logo combine to create and sustain life. Greater Wellington promotes **Quality for Life** by ensuring our environment is protected while meeting the economic, cultural and social needs of the community.



Photo of view from Cannon Point by Jessica Dewsnap.
Photo of Karapoti Classic mountain bike race by www.karapoti.co.nz

MORE INFORMATION

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www.metlink.org.nz

www.gw.govt.nz

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How to get there



All visitors: Off SH2: Karapoti Rd via Akatarawa Rd, Upper Hutt north of Mackays Crossing.
Off SH1: Maungakotukutuku Rd, via Waterfall Rd 1km north of Mackays Crossing.

Non-motorised visitors: Off SH 58: - Cooks Rd via Moonshine Rd and Bulls Run Rd - via Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, Paekakariki Hill Rd
Via Cannon Point Walkway: Bridge Rd (off Akatarawa Rd), Tulsa Park or Valley View Road off Totara Park Rd, Upper Hutt
Take a No. 111 bus (Mon-Sat) to the end of Totara Park Road from Upper Hutt Railway Station

Rugged Isolation

Covering nearly 15,500 hectares between Upper Hutt and the Kapiti Coast, the Akatarawa Forest is a mix of native and exotic forest broken by steep valleys and river gorges.

Mountain, quad and trail bikers find a variety of routes along the tracks and old logging roads. The forest is the venue for the internationally renowned Karapoti Classic mountain bike ride.

Also popular for horse riding, fishing, hunting and tramping, the Akatarawa Forest provides enjoyable and testing terrain for 4WD-vehicle club trips.

For your safety

Take extreme care on all tracks and roads. They are used by logging trucks, 4WDs and trail bikes as well as trampers, mountain bikers and horse riders. Some are not sign-posted or maintained. There is no cellphone coverage in the forest.

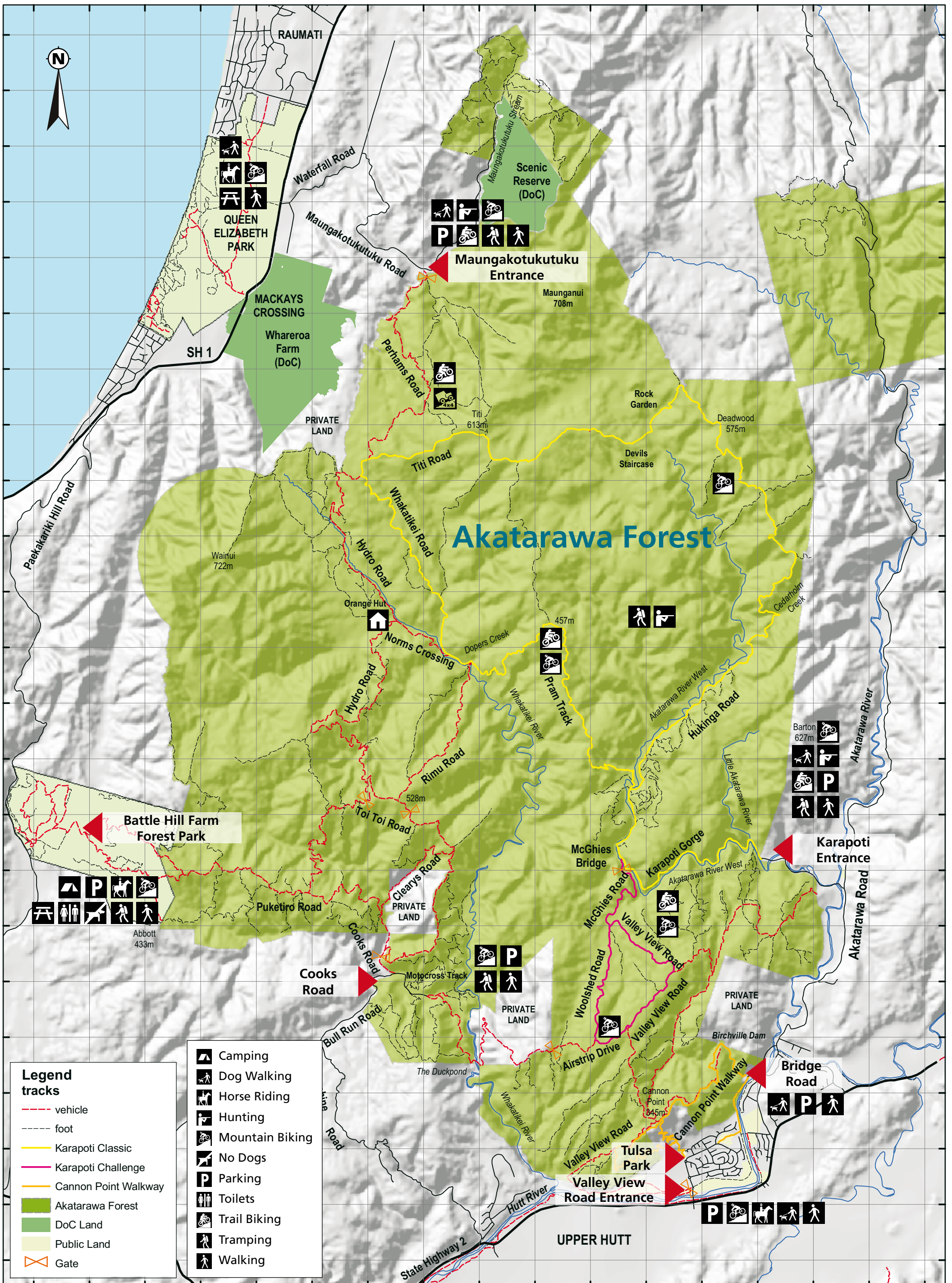
Check the weather forecast before your trip

Leave your intentions with someone

Keep to marked tracks unless you know the area

Take a copy of NZMS260 map 26 and a compass

Take adequate warm waterproof clothing and food



Akatarawa Forest

0 0.5 1 2 Kilometers