









Caring for your park

-  Pack in and pack out. Take your rubbish home and recycle it where possible.
-  Dogs are not permitted, including those in vehicles.
-  Do not remove, disturb or damage plants or animals.
-  Light fires only on the concrete firepads in the front paddocks, subject to fire bans. Portable gas barbecues are permitted.
-  Use gates and stiles. Leave gates as you find them.
-  Poison may be laid in the park to control possums. Do not remove notices or disturb baits, lures, trapping lines or carcasses.

Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

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.



Head for the hills

Site of one of the last battles between Maori and early colonial forces in the region, Battle Hill Farm Forest Park blends traditional hill country farming, forestry and environmental restoration. With its farm setting, native bush reserve and panoramic views, Battle Hill provides a great opportunity to enjoy the open spaces of rural Wellington.

Battle Hill's 500 hectares are a mix of flat, rolling and steeper hill country, making it a haven for walking, horse riding, mountain biking, camping and picnicking. The flat Airstrip and front paddocks are ideal for group events, while the Ken Gray Education Centre is often the base for school and community group visits.

Farm visits

Contact the ranger to arrange a free school or group visit, meeting the farm animals and learning more about the park's history.



Photos of view from Battle Hill, picnic in Corner Paddock and mountain biker by Jessica Dewsnap. Painting of Rangihaeata, Rauparaha's fighting general and chief actor in the Wairau Massacre by R Hall, A-114-046, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ.

MORE INFORMATION

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GW/PF-G-08/234



History

On a cold August morning in 1846 the first shot was fired in a confrontation between Government forces and around 300 of Te Rangihaeata's Ngati Toa near the summit of Battle Hill.



Relationships between the Crown and Maori in the Wellington region had been breaking down for some years, due to the New Zealand Company attempts to purchase large tracts of land for Pakeha settlers. Maori under the protection of Te Rangihaeata had been evicted from their lands in the Hutt Valley and Crown attempts at arbitration were unsuccessful as Ngati Toa continued to resist growing pressure to sell their land. In a climate

of mounting fear following the conflict and deaths at Wairau and in the Hutt Valley, Governor Grey hatched a two-pronged plan to secure Ngati Toa's land by stealth. The first phase of the plan was to kidnap Te Raupararaha from his pa in Plimmerton, and then the way was clear for Grey to launch a second-phase attack on Te Rangihaeata and his Ngati Toa, and Ngati Rangatahi allies.

Leaving from the Hutt Valley, a mixed group of around 500 British troops, police, militia and Te Atiawa allies joined forces to converge on Te Rangihaeata's pa at Pauatahanui. Finding it deserted, they pursued him through dense forest up the Horokiri Valley to what is now Battle Hill Farm Forest Park. A few hundred Ngati Toa under the leadership of Rawiri Puaha joined with Grey's forces in pursuit of Te Rangihaeata. However, these warriors turned out to be loyal supporters of Te Rangihaeata, supplying him with ammunition and assistance in effecting his eventual escape.

Te Rangihaeata had built a temporary pa on an almost unassailable razorback ridge near the summit of Battle Hill. On the morning of 6 August, the Government force attacked and tried to storm the pa. Return fire from Te Rangihaeata's men halted the attack, killing three Government troops. Sending to Porirua for backup mortars, the allied force settled into a siege, and bombarded Te Rangihaeata's pa for several days. On 13 August, after losing at least nine people and only just surviving on mamaku, Ngati Toa fled north.

Te Rangihaeata was never to return to his turangawaewae or "place of standing" in the Wellington area. Instead he was forced to live out the remaining 10 years of his life in exile with his Ngati Huia relations, at Poroutawhao, north of Levin.

Demoralised and devoid of the leadership and protection of their two principal chiefs, Ngati Toa finally conceded to Crown demands for the sale of their land. In return for a few thousand pounds and the promise of Te Rauparaha's release, the Crown extracted from Ngati Toa around 608,000 acres in the Wairau and 25,000 acres in Porirua, including what is now the Battle Hill Farm Forest Park.

In 1860 the bush covered land was sold to the 62 year old Henry Abbott who set about clearing it and stocking it with cattle. On his death in 1882 the farm passed to his sons Roderick and Nicholas, and it remained with his family until 1975. Wellington Regional Council purchased the park in 1987. Henry Abbott, his son Henry and daughters Maria and Delia are buried at Battle Hill in a small graveyard along with two of the three militiamen killed in the battle of 1846.

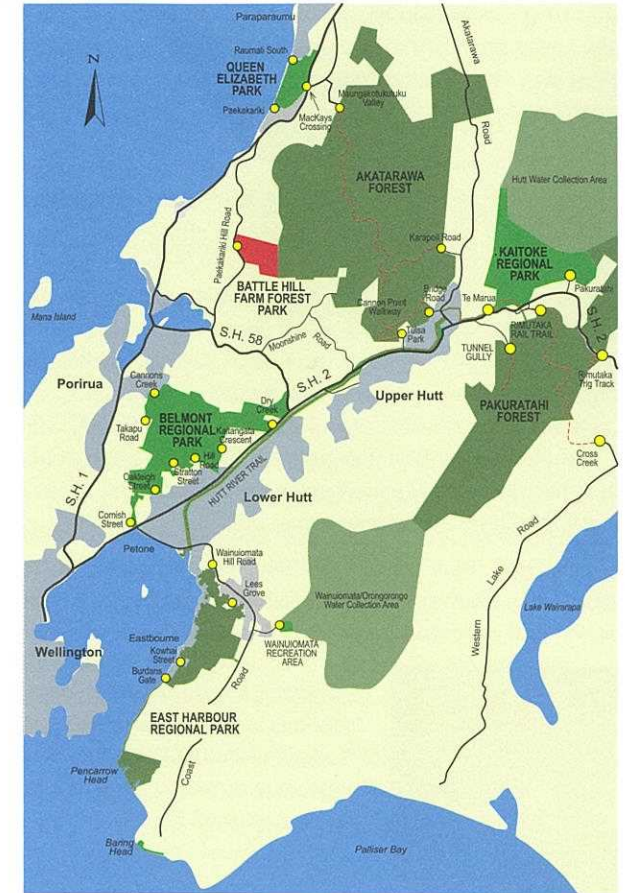
Discover forest, farm and wetlands



The Government forces pursuing Te Rangihaeata took three days to walk 6km from Pauatahanui to Battle Hill, greatly hampered by the dense native forest. A small but significant remnant of this forest remains near the park's front paddocks. Along with tawa, titoki and kohekohe the forest supports the swamp-loving kahikatea, pukatea and swamp maire.

Roughly half the park is planted in pines, with the rest in pasture, dotted with native and exotic trees. Greater Wellington is working with the community to restore two large wetlands and plant along stream banks. This will help improve wildlife habitat, and water quality in the Horokiri Stream.

Native plantings and ongoing pest control have improved habitats for a wide range of birds on the property. Tui, piwakawaka (fantail) and kereru (NZ pigeon) feed on the array of vegetation, while mallards and putangitangi (paradise shelducks) enjoy the pasture and restored wetlands.



How to get there

Private vehicle

Turn off SH58 at Pauatahanui onto the Paekakariki Hill Road and drive 6km to Battle Hill Farm Forest Park. Alternatively, turn off SH1 at Plimmerton onto Grays Rd, then turn left at the end onto Paekakariki Hill Rd. The Kapiti end of Paekakariki Hill Road beyond Battle Hill is not suitable for heavy vehicles.

Opening hours

The park opens at 8am everyday of the year. Much of the park is closed from August to October for lambing, although some key tracks remain open. Contact the ranger or see www.gw.govt.nz for more information.

Dogs are not permitted in the park, including those left in vehicles.

What can you do here?

You may walk throughout the park. The front paddocks and bush reserve are closed to horse riders and mountain bikers. Horse riders and mountain bikers must give way to walkers, and all must keep to the tracks in wet conditions.

Contact the ranger to arrange a free group visit, meeting the farm animals, and learning more about the park's history.

Walking tracks

Walking-only tracks start at the gate to the front paddocks beside the ranger's house.

Bush Reserve Short Loop —

Easy 15 minutes

Follow the track to the bush reserve near the Corner Paddock toilets and climb gently for 50m before dropping gradually to the stream. Turn left at the fork and head south, returning over the footbridge to the Corner Paddock. Cross the small bridge slightly upstream of the ford.



Summit Loop —

Moderate 1.5 hours

Start the trail at the sign overlooking the graveyard; the signage will guide and inform you of the historic battle as you climb the track past significant sites to the summit. On a fine day there are wonderful views south towards the Pauatahanui Inlet. Return via the Bush Reserve to the starting point.

Multi-use tracks

All tracks start at the Dell carpark.

Restoration Trail —

Easy 1 hour walking

Follow the farm road up through the Airstrip between the wetlands and deer paddocks and up onto the Gas Line Ridge overlooking Transmission Gully. Turn right and head south along the top of the ridge beside the deer fence. Turn right through the horse gate and drop back down to the Airstrip. From here you can head south alongside the stream to the seep area and St Bernard's educational woodlot. Walkers may cross the Airstrip paddock and use the gate at the southern end to visit the riparian (streamside) planting area en route to the car park.

Wetlands Walk —

Easy 1 hour walking
Suitable for novice riders

Follow the farm road up through the Airstrip between the wetlands and the deer paddocks. Go through the gate into the Swampy Gully Paddock and follow the farm track up the gully. Explore the Swampy Gully wetland (first planted in 2004) via the side loop. Or keep climbing the main farm track before looping back to the south, through the gate into the Spring Paddock, then back to the Airstrip and carpark.

Farm Loop —

Moderate 2 hours walking
1 hour riding

Follow the farm road up the Airstrip, then take the track north through the Oak Paddock, into the Battle Hill Paddock and up the hill. Approximately 200 metres short of the Battle Hill summit a track forks to the right down the hill. Follow this track back to the carpark past the Swampy Gully wetlands and the deer paddocks.

Transmission Gully – Puketiro Loop —

Strenuous 4 hours walking
2 hours riding

Please travel the loop in a clockwise direction and take warm clothing as the hilltops are exposed to strong winds. From the Dell carpark follow the farm road through the Airstrip and over the Gas Line Ridge to Transmission Gully. Follow the markers across the paddock to the stream and take the left-hand gate into the forest. The track climbs the hill through the pine plantation to the top from which you will have great views of the Pauatahanui Inlet and the South Island on a clear day. Follow the track markers south along the top before continuing downhill back to Transmission Gully. Return to the carpark over the Gas Line Ridge.



There are some great picnic spots with full vehicle access in the front paddocks beside the stream. Visitors willing to walk are welcome to picnic anywhere in the park. Groups may book a picnic site. Contact the ranger for costs and details.

The sheltered and tree lined front paddocks offer pleasant camping sites, with a shallow stream and the bush reserve close by. Please register with the ranger. Prior booking is essential for groups of 8 or more. Camping fees are \$5/ adult; \$2/ child per night.

Gas BBQs are permitted all year round. Please place your BBQ on a concrete pad in summer. Campfires may be lit only on the concrete firepads in the front paddocks, and are subject to fire bans; please check with the ranger before lighting.

Cool off in the shallow pool downstream of the ford in the Horokiri Stream.

Park your horsefloat in the Dell loop carpark. The jumps are for organised equestrian events only and casual use is not permitted. Please remove all hay, twine and horse manure from the area around your float. The park may be closed to horseriding when the ground conditions are wet.

Flush toilets and drinking water facilities are situated in front of the woolshed and in the front paddock campground.

