

Forest Access Policy

Subject	Forest Access Policy	13/02/25
Sharepoint: Policies & Procedures		
This Forest Access Policy has been developed and is periodically reviewed every 3 years in consultation* with recreational and community representative groups and affected stakeholders.		

1. Purpose

West Coast Forests welcomes visitors to our forest to enjoy the recreational, business and event opportunities on offer. A Forest Access Permit must be obtained prior to entering any of our Forests.

Forest access is generally permitted to all areas that do not have forestry operations underway or are closed for protection, security or safety purposes.

An extract from the West Coast Forests – Forest Management Plan (detailed access details) can be found in Appendix 1.

Forests where permits are available are identified on a web map when accessing the permit application facility through the website.

2. Access Permits

Forest entry is by permit only and must be applied for in advance either by using our website <https://webapps.ngaitahu.iwi.nz/forest-permit>, phoning the Office on (03)768 6424 or coming in to talk to our friendly staff.

Exceptions are recreational groups who are wanting to hold an event in the Forest (example the Gold Trail Bike Ride), this event will be managed by the organising group (in the first instance, all requests of this type and nature are to be directed to West Coast Forests staff for consideration and confirmation as to whether this will be approved before a permit can be obtained).

When making decisions about forest access West Coast Forests will take into account:

- The wishes of landowners and in accordance with legal agreements (leases, forestry rights, joint ventures).
- Managing the safety of those accessing and working in the forest, and in particular ensuring forest operations do not put the recreating public at risk.
- The protection of areas of significant flora, fauna and cultural values.
- The protection of forests from damage, dumping of rubbish and fire.
- Compliance with all regulatory requirements including the conditions of Overseas Investment Office approvals.
- Compliance with forest certification requirements Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC-C007525) SGSCH-FM/COC-000763

The views of local communities and stakeholders.

West Coast Forests employees may stop and ask to see your permit, you must have a copy of the permit available for inspection at any time while you are visiting our forests. If you do not have a copy, you will be asked to leave the forest immediately and may be escorted out of the forest.

3. Regulations

All persons entering the forest agree to follow the “General Terms and Conditions” and “Specific Conditions” which is displayed on the back of your permit. These must be followed at all times, failure

to do so will result in cancellation of the permit & trespass from the forest. Permits will not be issued to anyone trespassed or in receipt of a warning from West Coast Forests.

Where any West Coast Forests managed forests are accessed through or adjoin or contain Public Access Easements created by the Crown Forest Assets Act formed or unformed legal roads, marginal strips, esplanade strips and other access easements, that provide public access across other land areas such as Public Conservation Land or rivers, people can travel on these without acquiring a permit, but they must abide by the conditions of West Coast Forests risk management measures:

- The purpose of the easements is to provide access to or from other land – no stopping on the easements is permitted without consent from the landowner
- Easements may be closed by either the landowner or easement holder for risk reasons (i.e. fire danger, safety). Please respect any closures, which will be notified by forest signage
- Non-compliance may result in trespass or legal action.

Appendix 1: Extract from Forest Management Plan – Access Details

1.1 Recreation

All of the WCF forests are open for recreation subject to safety and operational requirements.

Permitted activities (subject to meeting the conditions of access) include walking, biking, hunting, and firewood collection. To ensure safety in the forests an Access Permit is required prior to entry.

Access Permits are issued online via <https://webapps.ngaitahu.iwi.nz/forest-permit>, or from the WCF office in Greymouth.

Known hazards within the forests include (but are not limited to):

- Mine shafts and associated workings.
- Very steep terrain with vertical walled chasms cut through papa and sandstone.
- Operational areas - public access is prohibited at all times.
- Other road users including log trucks and heavy construction vehicles.
- Road conditions – hazards may include; variations in road width, vegetation on and surrounding the road, variations in road surfaces (gravel, slippery when wet or frosty, and uneven surfaces), sudden dips, fords, narrow bridges and culverts, steep drop offs at road edges, soft road edges, blind corners, winding roads, steep gradients, and windblown trees across roads.

Forest visitors are expected to follow the intent of the Outdoor Access Code^{16F}¹ (published by Herenga ā Nuku - Outdoor Access Commission), as well as any signage / barriers in place within the forest. Closures will also apply during times of high fire risk, any *force majeure* state and during forestry operations.

1.2 Public access

Public access over land varies depending on the land ownership and legal provisions. Broadly, access falls into three categories:

1. Access over public land adjoining private forestry land.
2. Access over forest land via easements.
3. Access managed by the landowner or WCF.

1.2.1 Legal roads and public land

Legal roads (formed and unformed), marginal strips or other public conservation land (PCL), and reserves are all publicly owned land. Forest managers cannot restrict public access to these areas or any other forms of public land.

- Legal roads – Managed by territorial authorities or Waka Kotahi (NZTA).
- Marginal strips/other PCL – Managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC).
- Reserves – Managed by either territorial authorities or DOC.

Forest managers may apply to the relevant road-controlling authority to temporarily close legal roads in specific circumstances, such as fire risk or for safety concerns. Historically, many unformed legal roads have

¹ <https://www.walkingaccess.govt.nz/assets/Publication/Files/Outdoor-Access-Code/0fcf4d2e5b/Outdoor-Access-Code.pdf>

been treated by adjoining landowners as an extension of their property. In many cases, trees have been planted on unformed legal roads where they are adjacent to forestry property, with people able to walk through the trees. If these unformed legal roads were excluded from planting alongside the surrounding forest, they would quickly regenerate in weed species. The unmanaged vegetation growth would likely result in a dense, inaccessible barrier rather than enable access. To address the presence of planted trees on unformed legal roads, WCF provides for public access across the wider forest area. This approach maintains practical access through the forest without requiring users to remain within the narrow and often indistinct boundaries of unformed legal roads. Should there be a desire for an unformed legal road to become formed, WCF will work with the stakeholders to ensure a practical outcome is reached. If there is third party interest in formally developing an unformed legal road, WCF will work with the relevant stakeholders to achieve a practical and acceptable outcome.

There are legal instruments providing public access within or adjacent to some parts of the West Coast Forests. Refer to the following table, the Herenga ā Nuku - Outdoor Access Commission's 17F² maps online for user friendly maps 18F³ (<https://maps.walkingaccess.govt.nz/Viewer/?map=b1d1e76a6c754d11b3f3fd9dfce1eb12>)

Forest legal roads and public land

Forest	Legal roads and public land
Butlers	50% bounded by Public Conservation Land, The Camp Creek & Butlers Conservation Areas form the Western and part of the Eastern Boundaries. State Highway 6 forms part of the South Eastern boundary.
Charleston	100% bounded by Public Conservation Land, being the Little Totara River and Charleston Conservation Areas and Tiropahi Ecological Area.
Fairdown	60% bounded by Public Conservation Land, Mount Rochfort Conservation Area
Granville	60% bounded by Public Conservation Land, The Granville Ecological Area bounds the South and Eastern boundaries. The formed Granville Legal Road is used to access the Forest and forms a small part of the Northern forest boundary
Hochstetter	95% bounded by Public Conservation Land. The Southern blocks by the Hochstetter Wildlife Management Area and Hochstetter Ecological Area. The Northern Blocks are bounded by the Callaghans Creek and Ahaura River Conservation Areas. One unformed Legal/Marginal Strip runs through the Riverview block in the North of the Forest.
Hohonu	80% bounded by Public Conservation Land. Revell Terrace and Three Mile Amenity Areas form the Northern and Southern boundaries with the Hohonu Forest Conservation Area forming the Eastern Boundary. The formed Taramakau Settlement Legal Road runs along the Western Forest boundary.
Ianthe	95% bounded by Public Conservation Land. Lake Ianthe, Pukekura and Waitaha Scenic Reserves bound the Eastern and Southern boundaries. Ianthe Forest & Wanganui Coastal conservation Areas border the Western and South Western boundaries
Kaniere	85% bounded by Public Conservation Land. Lake Kaniere Scenic Reserve surrounds the Bluebottle block. Kaniere Ecological Area & the Blue Spur Range, Kaniere Forest

² Herenga ā Nuku – Outdoor Access Commission is a Crown entity (established under the Walking Access Act 2008). It is mandated to enhance public access to the outdoors by advocating for and improving access to tracks, trails, and waterways across Aotearoa New Zealand.

³ <https://maps.walkingaccess.govt.nz/Viewer/?map=b1d1e76a6c754d11b3f3fd9dfce1eb12>

	<p>Conservation areas surround the Wards Road block and the majority of the Eastern, Northern and Southern boundaries of the main forest area.</p> <p>Hau Hau & Tuckers Flat formed Legal Roads run through the tailing block and form part of the forest boundary in that area.</p>
Mahinapua	<p>60% bounded by Public Conservation Land. Seddon Terrace Conservation area, Back Creek Swamp Wildlife Management Area and Pleasant Point Scenic Reserve bound the Eastern part of the forest. Lake Mahinapua Scenic Reserve and Conservation area the South-Western Boundaries & Butlers Conservation Area the Sothern Boundary.</p> <p>Unformed Legal Roads form the Southern Boundary and run through parts of the forest.</p> <p>Adair and Frosty Creek formed Legal Road also run through and into the Forest.</p>
Mawhera	<p>95% bounded by Public Conservation Land. The Eastern Forest block are surrounded by the Blackwater Conservation Area and Deep Creek Ecological Area with the Western block bounded by the Ongionui Creek & Bell Hill Farm Conservation Areas and Deadman Ecological Area.</p> <p>The formed Notown Legal Road forms part of the Northern Boundary accessing the old Notown Town & Cemetery.</p> <p>An unformed Legal Road forms the boundary in the Donaldsons Valley area</p>
Mikonui	<p>60% bounded by Public Conservation Land, Waitaha & Totra-Mikonui Conservation Areas</p> <p>Happy Valley Road which is partly on Formed Legal Road and partly with the forest accesses freehold land with the unformed sections forming part of the forest boundary</p>
Mokihinui	<p>95% bounded by Public Conservation Land being the Ngakawai Ecological Area and Lyell Range-Radiant Range Conservation Areas.</p> <p>Formed Legal Road (Charming Creek Road) forms part of the boundary along with a marginal Strip on Chasm Stream.</p>
Nemona	<p>90% bounded by Public Conservation Land. To the South Greenstone Ecological Area bounds the majority of the Forest. Woods Creek Amenity Area also borders the Eastern and large parts of the Northern boundaries. The Taramakau Riverbed and Fireball Creek Conservation Areas bound the Western side with the Cockeye Creek-Cockabulla Creek Conservation Area bounding part of the Northern Boundary.</p> <p>Formed Legal Roads form the forest boundaries at Camerons, Noname, Lake Terrace and Maori Creek Roads.</p>
Omoto	<p>95% bounded by Public Conservation Land, to the West and North is the Card Creek Ecological Area. To the East Maori Gully Creek Conservation Area and to the South Woods Creek Amenity Area.</p> <p>There is an unformed Legal Road running through the Forest from North to South that partially follows the formation of Stillwater Creek Road forestry Road.</p>
Paparoa	<p>100% bounded by Public Conservation Land. Otututu Ecological Area surrounds the main blocks of the forest with the Moonlight Ecological Area and Paparoa South Conservation Area surrounding the small Moonlight blocks</p>
Te Wharau	<p>The Perseverance blocks of the forest are 100% surrounded by Public Conservation Land being Paparoa National Park, Te Twarau Wildlife Management Areas and the Fletcher Creek Ecological Area.</p> <p>The Maimai block is bounded on the Western and Southern sides by the Paparoa National Park and has an un-named formed Legal Road as the Northern Boundary.</p>
Totara	<p>80% bounded by Public Conservation Land. Tarleton Falls, Totara-Mikonui Conservation Areas & Doctor Hill Ecological Area border the Eastern, Southern and Northern boundaries with a partly formed legal road bordering the North Western Boundary.</p>

Victoria	Multiple scattered forest blocks mostly bordered by Victoria Forest Park with the Waitahu Pakahi block also bordered to the East by the Boatmans Creek-Capleston Conservation Area
Waimea	80% bounded by Public Conservation Land. The Big Dam Hill and Lake Mudgie Conservation Areas bound the Southern blocks with the Shamrock Creek Amenity Area located in the centre of the Forest. Other Conservations Areas within and bordering the forest are German Gully, Dillmanstown, Chesterfield, Kapitea Creek and Kumara Straight. Formed Legal Roads form the forest boundaries along the Lamplough Track Stafford Loop, Callaghans and Chesterfield Roads. Some unformed Legal Roads transect the Northern Blocks of the Forest in the Chesterfield Blocks.
Waitangi	95% bounded by Public Conservation Land. Waitangi, Wahapo and Okarito Forks Conservation Areas

Adjoining formed and unformed legal roads remain available for appropriate public access, subject to any temporary closures as required for safety and operational requirements. Temporary closures can only be undertaken with the authority of the local Territorial Authority.

Anyone who accesses legal roads (formed or unformed) within or adjacent to the forestry blocks is expected to abide by the intent of the Outdoor Access Code, as well as signage or barriers placed at track or public access points. Requirements for valid DOC permits for firearms and/or dogs when accessing public conservation areas via forestry blocks must be observed.

Access within the forests, including forestry roads and tracks, requires a permit issued by WCF.

1.2.2 Easements

Some forests have easements registered on the underlying land titles that provide for public access. Examples of easements are:

- Esplanade strips
- Access strips
- Rights of way
- Other land covenants (less common)

Easements typically define how the landowner can manage access (e.g. closure), as well as responsibilities for maintenance or signage, and they can specify the nature of public access (e.g. by foot only, with or without firearms or vehicle access). Most easements are surveyed, but not all. When easements are surveyed, they are easier for both the forest manager and the public to identify where they apply.

1.3 Land/forest owner managed access

Public access over the forestry land may be granted by the WCF. This can be for a range of non-forest activities which provide significant value to the wider community, e.g. sports events, hunting and horse-riding. These are expected to continue and potentially increase subject to appropriate agreements for access and management of conflicts.

This access is managed via a permit system.

1.4 Outdoor Access Code

The Outdoor Access Code, published by Herenga ā Nuku – Outdoor Access Commission provides further information for both landowners and users of public and private land.

Refer to: <https://www.herengaanuku.govt.nz/assets/Publication/Files/Outdoor-Access-Code/Outdoor-Access-Code.pdf>

The public are encouraged to behave respectfully on adjoining legal roads, public land and within the forests and to abide by the intent of the Outdoor Access Code, as well as signage or barriers placed at track or public access points.

Requirements for valid DOC permits for firearms and/or dogs must also be observed.