



Horowhenua 
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Waiopehu and Prouse Bush Reserve Management Plan

April 2016

PREFACE

Located on the eastern side of the Levin Township, Waiopahu Bush Reserve and Prouse Bush Reserve are important and valuable areas of indigenous and exotic forest for both the town of Levin and the Horowhenua District. As such the review and preparation of the Reserve Management Plan for Waiopahu and Prouse Bush Reserves was an important step in the current and future management of these reserves. The process involved a review of the Bush Reserves of Levin Management Plan including Waiopahu Scenic Reserve and Prouse Bush Reserve (2000) and the preparation of a new Reserve Management Plan for these bush reserves.

The purpose of this Reserve Management Plan is to provide clear direction and guidance as to how Waiopahu and Prouse Bush Reserves should be used, managed and developed in the future.

Informal consultation was undertaken with neighbours, reserve users and interested parties and this information was used to inform the preparation of the Draft Reserve Management Plan. The Draft Waiopahu and Prouse Bush Reserve Management Plan was publicly notified on 9 April 2014, to allow for public inspection and comment (by way of submission) on the contents of the Draft Reserve Management Plan and the associated general policies in the Draft Parks and Reserves General Policy Document. At the close of submissions on 9 June 2014, Council had received one (1) submission in relation to the Draft Waiopahu and Prouse Bush Reserve Management Plan.

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1. Introduction & Background

1.1 WHAT IS A RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN?

A Reserve Management Plan is a document prepared under the Reserves Act 1977. It contains objectives, policies and actions relating to the use, management and future development of a reserve.

Council's Reserve Management Plans act as a guide for Council Officers in making both day to day decisions as well as the long term decisions about how reserves and open spaces under Council's control are to be used, managed or developed.

1.2 WHAT IS THE GENERAL POLICY DOCUMENT?

The Horowhenua District Council has over 60 reserves and areas of open space that it owns or manages within the District. The majority of these reserves and open spaces are gazetted as reserve and classified under the Reserves Act. There are also a number of areas of open space, recognised and managed by Council as reserve land, which currently do not hold formal reserve status under the Reserves Act.

The General Policy Document provides objectives, policies and actions for management issues which are common throughout the majority of these Council managed reserves whether formally gazetted or not. This allows Council to adopt a consistent approach to the management of all reserves in a cost and time effective way.

This Reserve Management Plan provides objectives, policies and actions for issues which are specific to Waiopehu Bush and Prouse Bush Reserves and in some cases promote a targeted response for an issue which might also be addressed in the General Policy Document. These specific management provisions take precedence over the General Policy Document provisions where they relate to the same issue.

1.3 RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

All reserves that have been gazetted and classified as reserves under the Reserves Act, require a Reserve Management Plan to be prepared for their management and development (section 41(1)). Once a Reserve Management Plan is adopted, the Reserves Act (section 41(4)) requires that the Plan needs to be subject to continuous review to address new issues and opportunities as they arise for each reserve.

The process for preparing a Reserve Management Plan begins with Council publicly advertising its intention to prepare a Reserve Management Plan for an identified reserve or group of reserves. This triggers the beginning of an informal consultation process where the public are invited to provide comments and suggestions for how the Council's parks and reserves should be managed now and in the future. Although the Reserves Act sets out a prescribed process there is some flexibility around how the Council engages with the community during this stage of the process. Council under section 41(5A) does have the ability to resolve that written suggestions on the proposed plan would not materially assist the preparation and bypass this part of the process. Council will typically hold a series of public meetings or open days to enable members of the community to discuss ideas with Council Officers. Written suggestions and discussions during this phase inform the drafting of the Reserve Management Plan.

Following the preparation and public notification of the draft Reserve Management Plan, the formal consultation phase commences. Public submissions are received and summarised by Council

Officers. Following the close of the submissions period, a Council hearing is held to consider the submissions and submitters can have the opportunity to speak to their submission. A final Reserve Management Plan, incorporating decisions from the hearing, is prepared and adopted. The finalised Reserve Management Plan is submitted to the Minister of Conservation for approval. This concludes the Reserve Management Plan Review process.

1.4 NATIONAL STATUTORY CONTEXT

The Reserves Act 1977, the Local Government Act 2002, Conservation Act 1987 and the Resource Management Act 1991 set out the core regulatory functions of local authorities in managing reserve land. Reserve Management Plans require the consideration of these statutory documents.

Reserves Act 1977

The Reserves Act 1977 is the key piece of legislation for administering public reserves. The Reserves Act sets out how reserves are to be managed by administering bodies in accordance with the general purpose of the Reserves Act which is set out in Section 3 of the Act, and summarised as follows:

- providing for the preservation and management of areas for the benefit and enjoyment of the public
- ensuring, as far as possible, the survival of all indigenous species of flora and fauna
- ensuring, as far as possible, the preservation of access for the public
- providing for the preservation of representative samples of all classes of natural ecosystems and landscape
- promoting the protection of the natural character of the coastal environment and the margins of lakes and rivers.

Resource Management Act 1991

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) is the key piece of legislation for managing environmental resources in New Zealand. The purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. Council as an administering body and owner of reserve land is required to comply with provisions in the RMA and documents prepared under the RMA such as Regional and District Plans.

Local Government Act 2002

The Local Government Act 2002 enables and directs general administrative processes for local authorities in managing reserves.

Conservation Act 1987

The Conservation Act 1987 was developed to promote the conservation of natural and historic resources in New Zealand. The Act has a number of functions including the management of land for conservation purposes and fostering recreation activities on conservation land, providing the use is consistent with the conservation of the resource. This is relevant to the management of reserves as the administering body of this piece of legislation, the Department of Conservation, is involved in the management and maintenance of reserves classified under the Reserves Act.

Treaty of Waitangi

The Reserves Act 1977 is required to be interpreted and administered so as to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Reserve Management Plans in the Horowhenua District context will therefore, take into account the following principles:

- Tino Rangatiratanga
- Active Participation
- Partnership (Mutually Beneficial Relationship)
- Active Protection
- Iwi & Hapu Development

Reserve Management Plans seek to recognise and provide for the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga.

1.5 REGIONAL STATUTORY CONTEXT

Horizons Regional Council's One Plan

Horizons Regional Council's One Plan is a document that contains the Regional Policy Statement and Regional Plan for the Manawatu-Wanganui Region. As a district council, Horowhenua District Council is required to comply with the requirements of the One Plan in managing their reserves and protecting regionally significant natural features.

Regional Pest Plant Management Strategy and Regional Pest Animal Management Strategy

The purpose of these strategies are to address and remedy the degradation to environmental values cause by invasive plant and animal pests. Under these strategies Council is required to carry out plant and animal pest management pursuant to any Strategy rule on reserve land. These strategies identify pest species and outline the objective, aims, means of delivery, monitoring and outcomes for each species as well as rules for implementing the strategic direction.

1.6 LOCAL STATUTORY CONTEXT

Horowhenua District Plan

Prepared as a requirement of the Resource Management Act 1991. The Horowhenua District Plan (2015) zones Council's parks and reserves as Open Space. Issues, objectives and policies have been developed for the Open Space Zone that provide a framework for managing the types of activities and structures that are typical to parks and reserves in the District. For each zone there are rules which include the bulk and location requirements for future development.

Horowhenua Long Term Plan

Prepared as a requirement of the Local Government Act 2002. The Long Term Plan is a comprehensive document containing Council's financial policies, the activities and projects that Council intends on undertaking, the levels of service Council plans to provide, the prioritised capital projects, financial details and rating impact on the District for the next ten years.

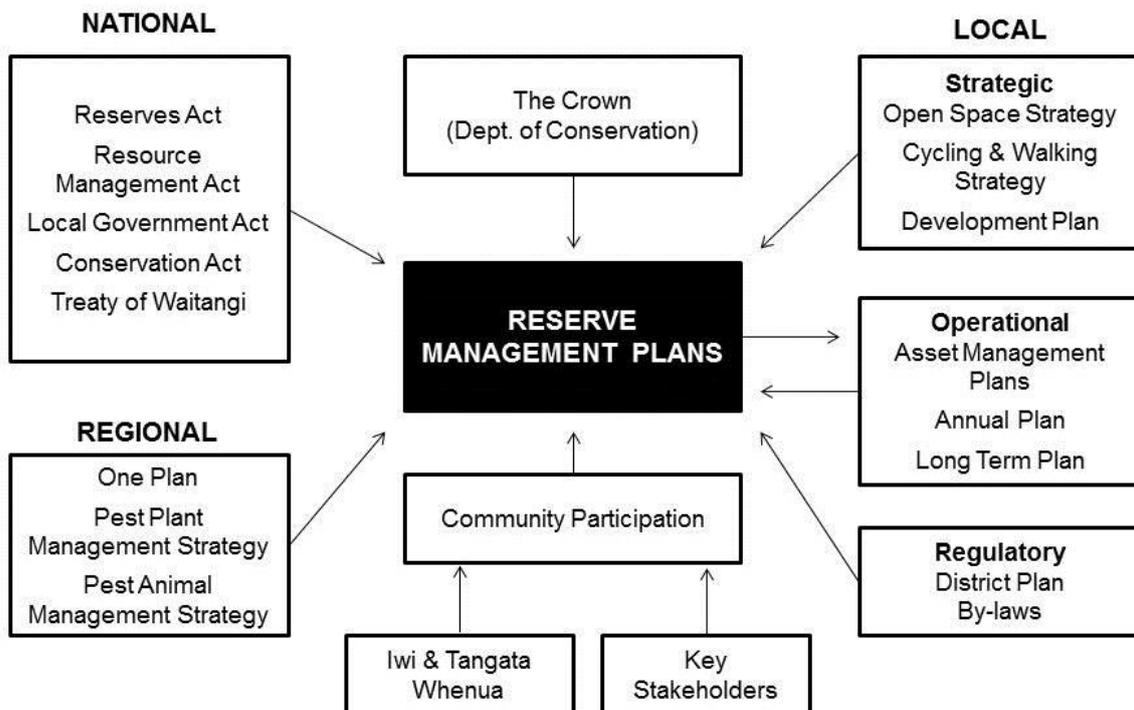
Open Space Strategy 2012

This Strategy provides a strategic vision for open space within the Horowhenua District. It takes a long-term view of the future of open space in the District and proposes a large number of specific actions within a strategic framework. The implementation of this Strategy will be through a range of other Council plans including Reserve Management Plans, Asset Management Plans and the District Plan.

1.7 STATUTORY CONTEXT DIAGRAM

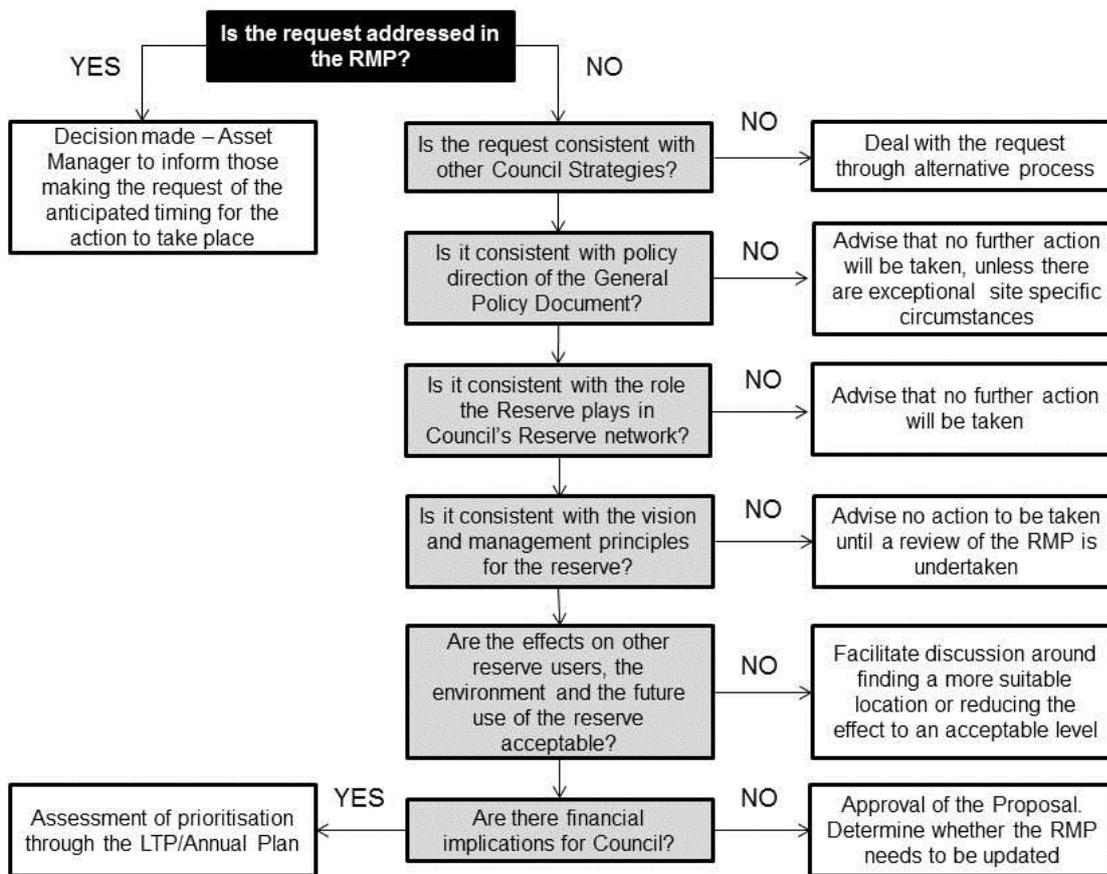
The following diagram details the statutory context set out above for Reserve Management Plans. The diagram also identifies the linkages and relationships that need to be considered and taken into account when reviewing or preparing Reserve Management Plans.

It is important to note that the examples listed in the diagram are not intended to be an exhaustive list, for instance other legislation at the national level can also be relevant (e.g. Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014). Also highlighted by this diagram are the different roles and functions that Council have in relation to the management of parks, reserves and open space.



1.9 DECISION MAKING PROCESS FOR REQUESTS NOT INCLUDED IN RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Reserve Management Plans are developed to provide both short and long term guidance regarding the use, management and development of reserves. At some point there are likely to be proposals submitted or requests made to Council that have not been specifically identified or included in the Reserve Management Plan. The following process set out below is intended to provide some consistency and guidance for making decisions about whether to proceed with these requests or proposals. The process, outlined below, should be used as a general guide and is not intended to avoid the consideration of other potentially relevant information.



2. Reserve Context

2.1 LAND STATUS AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Waiopehu Bush Reserve occupies land that is contained within certificates of title that make up an area of 9.1054 hectares. This reserve is located to the east of Levin in the south-western corner of Queen Street East and Gladstone Road (see Appendix 1)

Legal Description	Title	Area
Section 43 Block II Waiopehu Survey District (SO 12913)		6.6773 ha
Part Section 44 Block II Waiopehu Survey District (SO 16887)		2.4281 ha

Prouse Bush Reserve occupies land that is contained within certificates of title that make up an area of 4.7388 hectares. This reserve is located on the eastern side of Levin, south of Prouse Street and east of Totara Street (see Appendix 3).

Legal Description	Title	Area
Lot 2 DP 7147	599/215	4.0952 ha
Lot 22 DP 19044		0.2107 ha
Lot 23 DP 16667		0.4080 ha
Lot 3 DP49442	20A/982	0.0249 ha

2.2 COUNCIL CLASSIFICATION

Waiopehu Bush Reserve is zoned as Open Space in the Horowhenua District Plan (2015). The properties that adjoin the reserve are zoned Greenbelt Residential (Deferred) and the properties opposite the reserve that front Queen Street East and Gladstone Road are zoned as Rural.

Waiopehu Bush Reserve is classified as a Scenic Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 (Gazette 1913 p 3714 and 1915 p 1197).

Prouse Bush Reserve is zoned as Open Space in the District Plan (2015). The properties surrounding the bush reserve are zoned both Industrial and Residential.

Prouse Bush is classified as Public Reserve (599/215, T362796) and Recreation Reserve (577/296).

2.3 RESERVE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Waiopehu Bush Reserve

The land which now makes up Waiopehu Bush Reserve was acquired in 1889 together with some additional adjacent land parcels. This land was first established as a Waterworks Reserve.

In 1901 the reserve was gazetted for 'Recreation Purposes' under the Reserves Act (Gazette 1901 page 63). The classification of the reserve was changed to 'Reserve for Scenic Purposes' in 1912 (Gazette 1913 p 3724) and 1915 (Gazette 1915 p 1197). Waiopehu Bush Reserve remains classified as a Scenic Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 today.

The establishment of a formal carpark and entrance, and improvements to the tracks were undertaken in 1967 by the Levin Round Table in association with the Horowhenua County Council.

In 1959 control of the reserve was vested in the Levin Borough Council (Gazette 1959 p 618). During the Local Government Reform in 1989, control of the reserve was passed onto the Horowhenua District Council.

Prouse Bush Reserve

Prouse Bush, a remnant of the original forest present in the Horowhenua District, was gifted to the people of Levin in 1951 by Christina Prouse a descendent of an early pioneering sawmilling family. It was her intention that the reserve be maintained and managed by the Council in association with the Levin Native Flora Club and a representative of her family.

Since Council has managed Prouse Bush Reserve, Council have undertaken maintenance works including rubbish clearance, control of pest plants and track maintenance. Council has not undertaken significant development projects or works at Prouse Bush Reserve as they have adopted a precautionary approach to works such as pest plant eradication until further research has been undertaken on the potential impact on native species.

2.4 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Waiopehu Bush Reserve

Waiopehu Reserve is located approximately 3.5km west of the Levin township at the intersection of Queen Street East and Gladstone Road. The reserve fronts Queen Street East and the Queen Street Walkway on its northern boundary, and Gladstone Road on its eastern boundary. There are two formal access points to the reserve from Queen Street East however, there are informal access points from neighbouring properties to the south of the reserve.

Waiopehu Reserve vegetation consists of natural bush that is a relic of the Rimu - northern Rata forest. While little remains of the original forest, the current forest is in relatively good health, dominated by Tawa and Pukatea, with a well-developed understorey of regenerated growth. The forest understorey is currently characterised by large areas of the invasive exotic plant *Tradescantia fluminensis* (Wandering Willy)

The area is notable as having one of the few remaining populations of *Powelliphanta Traversi*, the native giant land snail.

The reserve is fenced along the boundary and includes a car park area for people travelling by car to enjoy the reserve. Adjacent to the car park is a picnic table and grass area at the entrance of the bush track. The bush walk consists of one main track and a shorter loop track which extends off

the main track. Within the reserve there is a seat for reserve users to rest and enjoy the view and also a bridge to ensure the track is useable in wet conditions.

Prouse Bush Reserve

Prouse Bush Reserve is situated off Bush Street and Totara Streets on the southern side of the Levin township.

There is one formal access point off the corner of Bush and Totara Streets. There is an informal access point to the east of the reserve from the neighbouring Levin War Veterans Home.

The northern and eastern boundaries of the reserve adjoin residentially zoned properties including the Levin War Veterans Home.

The land to the south of the reserve is zoned Industrial and is currently used as farmland. The land to the west of the reserve is used for industrial purposes.

This reserve includes a number of short gravel walking tracks which extend off, and form one larger loop track. There is also a seat within the reserve providing a resting spot for those using the track.



2.5 RESERVE USE

Waiopehu

The reserve is mainly used by walkers and, at times, cyclists. Since the establishment of the Queen Street Walkway, Waiopehu Bush Reserve has become a destination for people who enjoy the Walkway as well as a popular attraction for neighbours to the reserve. The car park is sometimes used for picnics and as a meeting place. Use of the reserve has not changed significantly over the years and it remains a tranquil and restful place to visit.

Prouse

Prouse Bush is used by residents from the Prouse Street area, some of whom have taken responsibility for clearing the bush of a build up of rubbish from time to time. Dogs are not permitted in the Bush Reserve however, representation has been made by local dog owners for this to be reversed.

2.6 LEASES

There are no lease agreements in place for Waiopehu Bush Reserve or Prouse Bush Reserve.



3. Reserve Management - Waiopehu Bush

3.1 VISION FOR WAIOPEHU BUSH RESERVE

To develop and manage Waiopehu Bush Reserve as a reserve with natural, ecological and scenic values as well as recreational and educational values for local residents and visitors to the Horowhenua District.

In achieving this vision:

- Waiopehu Bush Reserve will be recognised as a premier scenic reserve in the District that provides high quality walkways and facilities.
- Waiopehu Bush Reserve will attract local residents and visitors due to the natural surrounds, recreational opportunities and the learning experience.
- Waiopehu Bush Reserve will be developed in a way that preserves the natural values which make it a unique attraction to the District while attracting more users to enjoy and use the reserve.
- Waiopehu Bush Reserve will form part of a greater network of open spaces and recreation grounds in the District through the connection with the Queen Street Walkway.

3.2 MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Maintain and preserve the reserve's natural and recreational qualities and value as a Scenic Reserve.

Recognise the value of the reserve within the District in providing a specific area of exotic and native forest for the local community to use and enjoy as well as visitors to the District.

Provide appropriate facilities to support the use of the reserve.

Provide for educational and recreational activities that compliment and do not interfere with the Scenic Reserve purpose of the reserve.

3.3 PROTECTION OF NATURAL, ECOLOGICAL AND SCENIC VALUES

Issues/Opportunities

Waiopehu Bush Reserve has native and exotic flora and fauna which is unique to the reserve and requires protection from invasive pest species to conserve the natural values of the reserve. Pest plants such as *Tradescantia fluminensis* (Wandering Willy) compete with native species and threaten to disrupt the canopy structure and natural revegetation cycle. Species such as Wandering Willy also provide cover for the protected native snail *Powelliphanta traversi*, so Council must work to control the plant to minimise disruption to the forest structure while still providing a habitat for the protected snail. Pest animals such as possums, stoats, ferrets, rats and mice also threaten the natural life in the reserve.

There are also human influences which can threaten the natural, ecological and scenic values of the reserve. People can cause damage to the natural environment by incorrectly disposing of rubbish, straying from formed tracks and walking dogs on the reserve. These activities can damage the ground cover vegetation and in turn threaten the lower canopy ecosystem including the habitat and existence of the native snail. Adjacent landowners can also have an impact on the health of the reserve. Encroachment of exotic plant species and intrusion of stock from

neighbouring properties can compete with the forest and damage vegetation, as can the formation of informal access from private property.

Future development of the reserve must consider the health and well being of the natural features in the reserve. For this reserve to meet its full potential and be considered a premier bush reserve in the District, future development and management of the reserve must preserve the natural, ecological and scenic values.

Objectives

- 3.3.1 To maintain and enhance the indigenous biological diversity, ecological health and scenic values of Waiopehu Bush Reserve.
- 3.3.2 To provide opportunities for the public to enjoy and appreciate the values of Waiopehu Bush Reserve while also encouraging the active protection of these values.

Policies

- 3.3.3 Manage pest animals and other exotic fauna, as far as practicable, to reduce the presence of pest animals in Waiopehu Bush Reserve.
- 3.3.4 Manage pest plants and other exotic flora, as far as practicable, to reduce the presence of pest plants in Waiopehu Bush Reserve.
- 3.3.5 Prevent the encroachment of exotic plant species onto Waiopehu Bush Reserve from neighbouring properties.
- 3.3.6 Prevent the formation of informal tracks into and within Waiopehu Bush Reserve.
- 3.3.7 Ensure stock including horses, are permanently excluded from Waiopehu Bush Reserve.
- 3.3.8 Restrict dog access onto Waiopehu Bush Reserve (Refer to General Policy Document Policy 4.19).
- 3.3.9 Avoid the disposal of rubbish and other inappropriate waste in Waiopehu Bush Reserve other than rubbish waste collected in the facilities provided (Refer to General Policy Document Policy 4.6).
- 3.3.10 Ensure that all waste material disposed of in Waiopehu Bush Reserve is removed (Refer to General Policy Document Policy 4.6).
- 3.3.11 Prohibit use and development of Waiopehu Bush Reserve that would adversely affect the indigenous biological diversity, ecological health or scenic value of the reserve.
- 3.3.12 Encourage projects that assist with regeneration and help to protect, enhance and restore the natural, ecological and scenic values of Waiopehu Bush Reserve.
- 3.3.13 Support future development that seeks to enhance the scenic value of Waiopehu Bush Reserve.

Actions

- Carry out pest animal and pest plant management in accordance with Regional Council Pest Plant and Pest Animal Strategies requirements.
- Manage pest animals and pest plants as far as practicable.
- Involve the community in monitoring and eliminating pest animal species.
- Regularly monitor the extent and adequacy of fencing surrounding the reserve.
- Construct and repair fences on reserve land to prevent stock from entering the reserve, and encourage adjoining landowners to erect fences to keep stock out of the reserve.
- Encourage correct disposal of rubbish through providing rubbish collection bins.
- Consult with neighbouring landowners to stop the formation of informal tracks into and within the reserve.
- Assess the impact of land use and development proposals on the natural, ecological and scenic values of the reserve.
- Facilitate and encourage the implementation of appropriate restoration and planting programs through providing advice and resources where practicable.

Explanation

Meaningful monitoring and management control of pest species contributes to the health of the reserve and works to protect its natural, ecological and scenic values. There are invasive flora and fauna species which have the potential to threaten and undermine the very natural values that make Waiopehu Bush Reserve a unique and significant attraction in the District. These values include both flora species and fauna such as the protected native snail.

Partnerships with local reserve users, neighbours and community groups provide the opportunities for Council to work with the public to efficiently and effectively eliminate pest species, reduce human impact and preserve the natural, ecological and scenic values of the reserve.



3.4 RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL VALUES

Issues/Opportunities

Waiopahu Bush Reserve is used for recreational purposes by both local residents and visitors to the District. The recreational value of the reserve however, could be better recognised to ensure that the reserve is appreciated, used and enjoyed to its full potential. Signage is an important tool to ensure that people know where the reserve is and what the reserve has to offer. If the signage is not well designed or effectively placed, new reserve users or visitors to the District will not be directed to or attracted to the site.

Within the reserve, it is important that the facilities accommodate reserve users while promoting best practice for using the recreational space. The reserve must provide access for all age groups and abilities to ensure the recreational space is enjoyed by all. If the facilities such as seating and tracks are constructed and maintained to a high standard, then foot traffic will be concentrated to minimise wide-spread damage and users will be more likely to use the space in a manner which respects the natural environment while being able to fully appreciate the recreational opportunities.

Waiopahu Bush Reserve does not currently display educational signage about the history of the site or the natural values of the reserve. The issue with not displaying such information about the reserve, is that reserve users will not fully appreciate the value of the reserve and understand why the area is protected and managed as reserve land. The risk with failing to communicate the importance of the site is that people will not get the maximum experience out of visiting the reserve, nor will they feel a sense of obligation or responsibility to contributing to or maintaining the recreational value of the reserve. With very few reserves in the District (and so close to the urban population) being able to offer the same 'nature education' experience there is a real opportunity to enhance the value of the reserve to the community.

Another issue which has the potential to threaten recreational and educational values is the trade-off between protecting natural values and protecting recreational and educational values. Future development which seeks to improve facilities such as development that involves bush clearance, provides greater recreational opportunities but may undermine preserving the natural environment.

Safety of reserve users is important in ensuring that observers, walkers and runners can enjoy the recreational space without feeling at risk. Dogs, horses and cyclists on the tracks can all threaten the safety of those enjoying passive forms of recreation. It is important that these activities are excluded from the reserve to make sure people are safe in reserves and that the recreational values are protected.

Objectives

- 3.4.1 To provide opportunities for the public to enjoy and appreciate the recreational values of Waiopahu Bush Reserve while also recognising why these values are to be protected.

Policies

- 3.4.2 Allow for freedom of public access to Waiopahu Bush Reserve provided this does not compromise the natural values of the reserve and the safety of reserve users.
- 3.4.3 Encourage development that contributes to improved public enjoyment of Waiopahu Bush Reserve where that development is compatible with natural and physical values of the reserve.

3.4.4 Promote greater awareness and appreciation of the historical and natural values of Waiopehu Bush Reserve.

Actions

- Restrict vehicle access to the reserve carpark after dark to prevent motor vehicles including Motor Homes from parking or camping overnight on reserve land without Council permission.
- Erect signage to effectively communicate the restriction of bicycles on the reserve.
- Consult with reserve users and community groups to assess the need or desire for development of recreational features such as tracks or educational projects such as signage that will enhance public enjoyment of the reserve.
- Erect necessary signage marking the entrance and access ways of the reserve.
- Install interactive signage educating reserve users of the natural features and values in the reserve.

Explanation

For people to enjoy and appreciate Waiopehu Bush Reserve they need to know where it is, how to get there and the value of the reserve itself. Signage has a key role to play in making sure Waiopehu Bush Reserve is a known site which is easy to find. Signage also plays a key role in communicating the many values of the reserve and the importance of maintaining the Scenic Reserve status of the site.

The natural values of Waiopehu Bush Reserve must be maintained and protected to ensure people get the best out of their recreational experience. As well as signage, better connections with other walkways and recreation spaces can create awareness of the reserve and make Waiopehu Bush Reserve a destination point. If networks, tracks and signage encourage positive interaction with the natural environment then people can get the best recreational experience while minimising damage to the surrounding natural environment.

Through maintaining and enhancing recreational values while introducing an educational element to the reserve, Council would be not only encouraging recreational activities but also creating an educational experience. This would diversify the use and value of Waiopehu Bush Reserve while encouraging further protection of the reserve and enhancing the recreational values. Waiopehu Bush Reserve offers a unique 'Nature Experience' close to the urban centre of Levin and it is important that this space is valued and optimised for the unique recreation opportunities.

4. Reserve Management - Prouse Bush

4.1 VISION FOR PROUSE BUSH RESERVE

To manage and investigate the potential of Prouse Bush Reserve as a reserve with natural and ecological values as well as recreational values for local residents and visitors to the Horowhenua District.

In achieving this vision:

- Prouse Bush Reserve will be recognised as a popular reserve in the District that provides a short, serene bush walk experience close to Levin urban area.
- Prouse Bush Reserve will attract local residents and visitors due to the natural surrounds and recreational opportunities.
- Prouse Bush Reserve will be managed in a way that preserves its natural values as a Recreation and Public Reserve.
- The natural and amenity qualities of Prouse Bush will be understood in terms of what value the reserve holds for the local neighbours and the wider District and be supported by local and neighbouring businesses.

4.2 MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Maintain and protect the reserve's natural and recreational qualities and values as a Recreation and Public Reserve.

Recognise the value of the reserve within the District in providing a specific area of exotic and native forest for the local community to use and enjoy as well as visitors to the District.

Provide appropriate facilities to support the use of the reserve.

Provide for recreational activities that compliment and do not interfere with the Recreation and Public Reserve purpose of the reserve.



4.3 PROTECTION OF NATURAL, ECOLOGICAL AND AMENITY VALUES

Issues/Opportunities

Prouse Bush has native and exotic flora and fauna which requires protection from invasive species to conserve the natural values of the reserve. The pest plant *Tradescantia fluminensis* (Wandering Willy) dominates the forest floor over much of the reserve. Eradication of this weed would allow the regeneration of the native understorey, without which the bush will degenerate into low scrub. However, Wandering Willy also acts as a deterrent to dogs and rats and provides protection for the insects and the native snail species, *Powelliphanta traversi*, and for this reason Council has historically adopted a cautious approach to the eradication of this plant species. A complete botanical and environmental survey of the bush would greatly assist in resolving this matter. There is no doubt, however, that Prouse Bush should be preserved for future generations as one of the last remaining examples of indigenous bush in the area.

Pest animals such as possums, stoats, ferrets, rats and mice also threaten the natural life in the reserve. This problem is exacerbated when rubbish is dumped or disposed of on the reserve which works to attract pest animals to the site.

There are also human influences which can threaten the natural and ecological values of the reserve. People can cause damage to the natural environment by incorrectly disposing of rubbish, straying from formed tracks and walking dogs on the reserve. These activities can damage the ground cover vegetation and in turn, threaten the lower canopy ecosystem. The management of adjoining properties can also have an impact on the health of the reserve. Encroachment of exotic plant species and intrusion of stock from neighbouring properties can compete with the forest and damage vegetation. Prouse Bush Reserve, being located adjacent to industrial properties, is at risk of potential contamination from rubbish disposal from the factories operating adjacent to the site.

Prouse Bush Reserve is located within a largely industrial setting with limited access available for potential users of the reserve. The residentially zoned land to the north-east of Prouse Bush does not have formal access to the reserve without travelling by car or foot to the street access on the corner of Totara and Bush Streets. The limited access could be considered a deterrent for those who would enjoy the short bush walk experience that Prouse Bush offers but are not aware of the reserve because of the lack of connectivity to the bush reserve. The limited access and limited use of the reserve makes Prouse Bush Reserve more prone to inappropriate activities and further works against attracting new users to the reserve site.

Objectives

- 4.3.1 To maintain and enhance the indigenous biological diversity and ecological health of Prouse Bush Reserve.
- 4.3.2 To provide opportunities for the public to enjoy and appreciate the values of Prouse Bush Reserve while also encouraging the active protection of these values.

Policies

- 4.3.3 Manage pest animals and other exotic fauna, as far as practicable, within and around the reserve.
- 4.3.4 Manage pest plants and other exotic flora, as far as practicable, within and around the reserve.

- 4.3.5 Prevent the encroachment of exotic plant species into the reserve from neighbouring properties.
- 4.3.6 Prevent the formation of informal tracks onto and within the reserve.
- 4.3.7 Ensure stock are permanently excluded from the reserve.
- 4.3.8 Restrict dog access onto the reserve (Refer to General Policy Document Policy 4.16).
- 4.3.9 Avoid the disposal of rubbish and other inappropriate waste in the reserve other than rubbish waste collected in the facilities provided (Refer to General Policy Document Policy 4.6).
- 4.3.10 Ensure that all waste material disposed of in the reserve is removed (Refer to General Policy Document Policy 4.6).
- 4.3.11 Prohibit use and development of the reserve that would adversely affect the indigenous biological diversity, ecological health or amenity value of the reserve.
- 4.3.12 Encourage projects that assist with regeneration and help to protect, enhance and restore the natural, ecological and amenity values of the reserve.

Actions

- Carry out pest animal and pest plant management in accordance with Regional Council Pest Plant and Pest Animal Strategies requirements.
- Manage pest animals and pest plants as far as practicable.
- Involve the community in monitoring and eliminating pest animal species.
- Regularly monitor the extent and adequacy of fencing surrounding the reserve.
- Construct and repair fences on reserve land to prevent stock from entering the reserve, and encourage adjoining landowners to erect fences to keep stock out of the reserve.
- Encourage correct disposal of rubbish through providing rubbish collection bins.
- Consult with neighbouring landowners to stop the formation of informal tracks into and within the reserve.
- Assess the impact of use and development proposals on the natural, ecological and amenity values of the reserve.
- Facilitate and encourage the implementation of appropriate restoration and planting programs through providing advice and resources where practicable.
- Investigate the potential future value of Prouse Bush Reserve and the place it holds in the Levin community and open space network.

Explanation

Pest animals such as possums and rats can threaten the natural life in the reserve. To avoid damage or disruption to the bush life, ongoing effective management and removal of pest species will work to protect the fauna native to Prouse Bush.

In managing and removing pest plants from Prouse Bush Reserve, consideration needs to be given to the native snail which is thought to exist there. Wandering Willy dominates the undergrowth in Prouse Bush which prevents regeneration of natives but also provides a habitat for the endangered native snail. Council must be weary of the role of Wandering Willy and work to manage the plant species as opposed to eradicating the species entirely. In the case of other pest plant species, effective management and removal will work to protect the existing bush environment while assisting in the regeneration of native species.

As with Waiopehu Bush and other conservation areas there is a conflict of interest between preservation and conservation matters and responsible owners who wish to walk their dogs on leads through areas of scenic interest, and who are likely to keep to designated tracks. Because its only access is from an industrial area, the bush has a history of misuse and neglect. It is important that dog access is limited to maintain the bush reserve and support efforts to improve the reserve.

Rubbish disposed of in the reserve should be disposed of in the rubbish bins provided and collected on a regular basis. Rubbish disposed of illegally from neighbouring properties should not be permitted and Council Officers should work with landowners to avoid this from happening. Rubbish can threaten the natural life in the reserve, attract pest animal species and reduce the amenity values, it is for this reason that Council should effectively control rubbish disposed of in the reserve.

Any proposal for future works in Prouse Bush Reserve, should be considered in terms of the potential effects on the natural and amenity values of the reserve. Development can cause damage to the natural ecosystem and could degrade the values which this plan seeks to protect. It is for this reason that the effects on the natural environment must be considered when making decisions about the use or development of the reserve.

Partnerships with local reserve users, neighbours and community groups provides the opportunity for Council to work with the public to efficiently and effectively eliminate pest species, reduce human impact and preserve the natural, ecological and amenity values of the reserve.

4.4 PROTECTION OF RECREATIONAL VALUES

Issues/Opportunities

Prouse Bush Reserve is not well used for recreational purposes. The reserve is not well-known and as a result, only a small number of local residents utilise the space and the recreational opportunities it offers. The recreational value of the reserve could be far better recognised to ensure that the reserve is appreciated, used and enjoyed to its full potential. Signage is an important tool to ensure that people know where the reserve is and what the reserve has to offer. If the signage is not well designed or effectively placed, new reserve users or visitors to the District will not be directed to or attracted to the site. Signage would also work to assist in building connections with other open spaces or movement routes in the District.

Within the reserve, it is important that the facilities accommodate reserve users while promoting best practice for using the recreational space. The reserve must provide safe and effective access to ensure the recreational space is enjoyed by all. If the facilities such as seating and tracks are constructed and maintained to a high standard, then foot traffic will be concentrated to minimise wide-spread damage and users will be more likely to use the space in a manner which respects the natural environment while still being able to fully appreciate the recreational opportunities.

Another issue which has the potential to threaten recreational and educational values is the trade-off between protecting natural values and protecting recreational values. Future development

which seeks to improve facilities such as development that involves bush clearance provides greater recreational opportunities but may not work to preserve the natural environment.

Visits to Prouse Bush Reserve by the general public appear to have lessened in recent years. This could be due in part to its location off an industrial area and to the narrow access and lack of carparking. The carparking area is bounded by a drain which makes the area available for parking rather narrow. This bush reserve would be claimed as a 'destination' site, however it is located too far from town to encourage casual foot traffic from the Levin township. On the other hand, with the Reserve only providing a short walking track it becomes difficult to justify driving to the reserve. People in vehicles tend to travel further afield unless they have a specific interest in the flora and fauna of the reserve.

Objectives

4.4.1 To provide opportunities for the public to enjoy and appreciate the recreational values of Prouse Bush Reserve and why they are to be protected.

Policies

4.4.2 Allow for freedom of public access to Prouse Bush Reserve provided this does not compromise the natural values of the Reserve and the safety of reserve users.

4.4.3 Encourage development that contributes to improved public enjoyment of Prouse Bush Reserve where that development is compatible with natural and physical values of the reserve.

4.4.4 Promote greater awareness and appreciation of the natural values of Prouse Bush Reserve.

Actions

- Erect necessary signage marking the entrance and access ways of the reserve.
- Consult with Council Officers and reserve users to assess the need or desire for development of recreational features such as tracks or signage that will enhance public enjoyment of the reserve.
- Investigate the potential for the creation of formal access ways from the northern and eastern boundaries of the reserve.
- Investigate the potential for building relationships with neighbouring businesses in managing and developing the reserve.
- Investigate the potential for acquiring adjacent land if the opportunity arises and there is demand and capacity to manage additional reserve land.

Explanation

For people to enjoy and appreciate Prouse Bush Reserve they need to know where it is, how to get there and the value of the reserve itself. Signage has a key role to play in making sure Prouse Bush Reserve is a known site which is easy to find. Achieving greater use of Prouse Bush will not only improve recreational use of the space but also work to address some of the inappropriate use and anti-social behaviour that has occur in the reserve in the past. This will work to further improve the safety of the reserve and the attractiveness to potential users.

The natural values of Prouse Bush Reserve must be maintained and protected to ensure people get the best out of their recreational experience. If tracks and signage encourage positive interaction with the natural environment then people can get the best recreational experience while minimising damage to the surrounding natural environment.

Through maintaining and enhancing recreational values in partnership with local businesses and landowners, Council would be not only encouraging recreational activities but also building positive relationships with members of the community. This would work to encourage further protection of the reserve and enhance the recreational values by involving and empowering the community to take ownership of the management of the reserve.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Waiopehu Bush Reserve Aerial Map



Appendix 2 - Actions Identified for Waiopehu Bush Reserve

Action	Importance
Carry out pest animal and pest plant management in accordance with Regional Council Pest Plant and Pest Animal Strategies requirements.	Low
Manage pest animals and pest plants as far as practicable.	Medium
Involve the community in monitoring and eliminating pest animal species	Low
Regularly monitor the extent and adequacy of fencing surrounding the reserve.	Low
Construct and repair fences on reserve land to prevent stock from entering the reserve, and encourage adjoining landowners to erect fences to keep stock out of the reserve.	Medium
Encourage correct disposal of rubbish through providing rubbish collection bins	High
Consult with neighbouring landowners to stop the formation of informal tracks into and within the reserve.	Low
Assess the impact of land use and development proposals on the natural, ecological and scenic values of the reserve.	Low
Facilitate and encourage the implementation of appropriate restoration and planting programs through providing advice and resources where practicable.	Medium
Restrict vehicle access to the reserve carpark after dark to prevent motor vehicles from parking overnight on reserve land without Council permission.	Low
Erect signage to effectively communicate the restriction of bicycles on the reserve.	Low
Consult with reserve users and community groups to assess the need or desire for development of recreational features such as tracks or educational projects such as signage that will enhance public enjoyment of the reserve.	Medium
Erect necessary signage marking the entrance and access ways of the reserve.	Medium
Install interactive signage educating reserve users of the natural features and values in the reserve.	Medium

Note: The level of importance assigned to each action above is based on the context of this reserve and has not been considered in relation to levels of importance assigned to other reserves in the District.

Appendix 3 – Prouse Bush Reserve Aerial Map



Appendix 4 - Actions Identified for Prouse Bush Reserve

Action	Importance
Carry out pest animal and pest plant management in accordance with Regional Council Pest Plant and Pest Animal Strategies requirements.	Low
Manage pest animals and pest plants as far as practicable.	Low
Involve the community in monitoring and eliminating pest animal species.	Low
Regularly monitor the extent and adequacy of fencing surrounding the reserve.	Medium
Construct and repair fences on reserve land to prevent stock from entering the reserve, and encourage adjoining landowners to erect fences to keep stock out of the reserve.	Medium
Encourage correct disposal of rubbish through providing rubbish collection bins.	Low
Consult with neighbouring landowners to stop the formation of informal tracks into and within the reserve.	Low
Assess the impact of use and development proposals on the natural, ecological and amenity values of the reserve.	Low
Facilitate and encourage the implementation of appropriate restoration and planting programs through providing advice and resource where practicable.	Low
Investigate the potential future value of Prouse Bush Reserve and the place it holds in the Levin community and open space network.	Low
Erect necessary signage marking the entrance and access ways of the reserve.	Medium
Consult with Council Officers and reserve users to assess the need or desire for development of recreational features such as tracks or signage that will enhance public enjoyment of the reserve.	Low
Investigate the potential for the creation of formal access ways from the northern and eastern boundaries of the reserve.	Low
Investigate the potential for building relationships with neighbouring businesses in managing and developing the reserve.	Low
Investigate the potential for acquiring adjacent land if the opportunity arises and there is demand and capacity to manage additional reserve land.	Low

Note: The level of importance assigned to each action above is based on the context of this reserve and has not been considered in relation to levels of importance assigned to other reserves in the District.