

Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park



Community Newsletter

September '98



The development of the Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park in the hills between South Karori Road and Makara Hill Road is proceeding well. The Wellington City Council have approved \$120 000 in the 98/99 Annual Plan for the park. So far, fencing around much of Makara Peak has been upgraded, goat control is continuing and 2000 native trees and shrubs have been planted in the area. A possum control programme is due to get underway this month. A community working group of local residents and mountain bikers has been set up to help guide the project. Volunteers have made an enthusiastic start on the development of a network of narrow tracks to link up the existing service roads. Although these tracks are being designed with mountain biking in mind, they will be open to all walkers and runners.

The Track Network

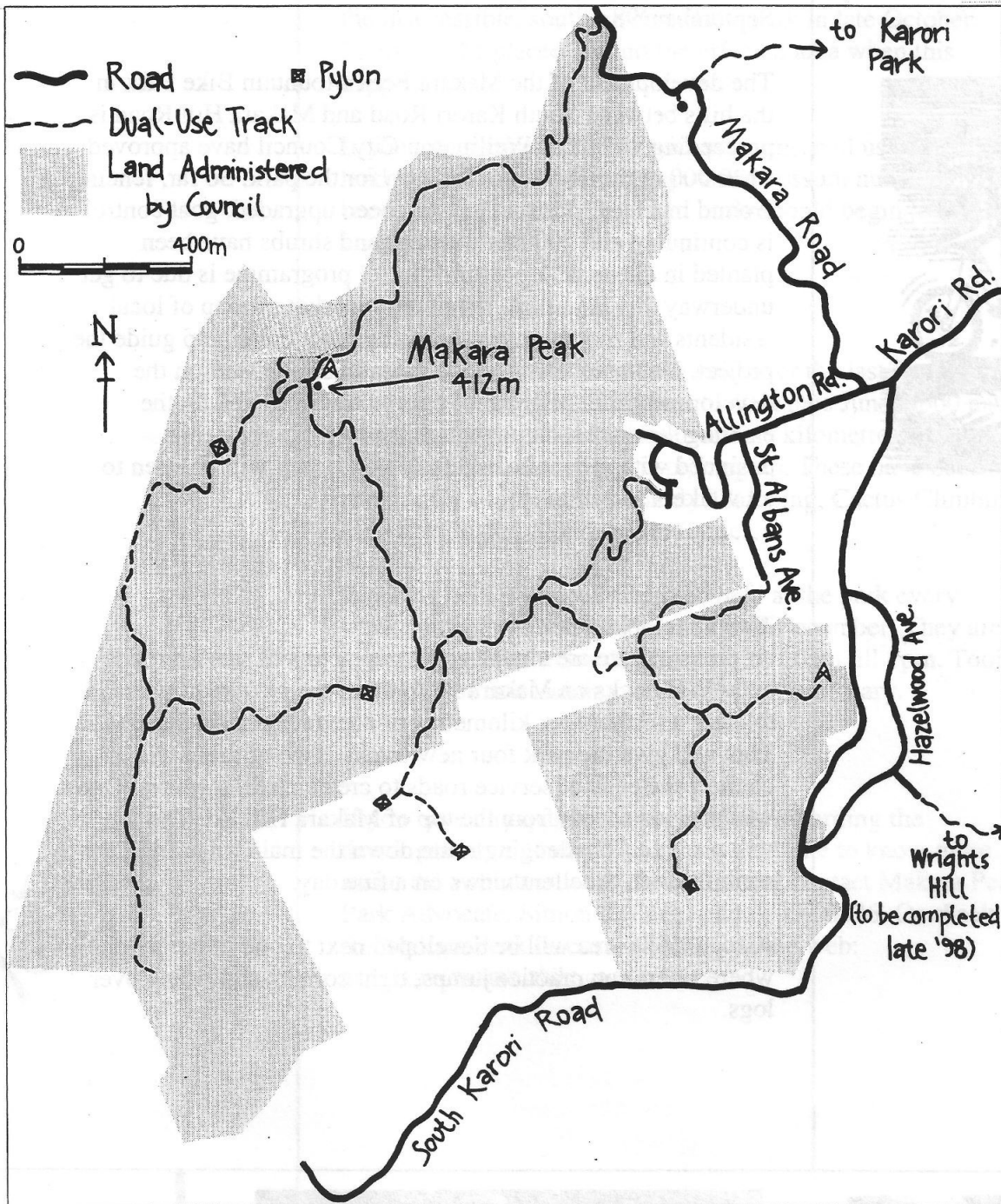
At present there are almost eight kilometres of service roads and 4WD tracks on Makara Peak. Over the next year, we plan to clear a further four kilometres of narrow track (by hand). This will give the park four new tracks. Two of these will connect the ends of service roads to create circular routes. One will provide access from the top of Makara Hill Rd. The fourth will provide a challenging route down the main ridge from the summit, with excellent views on a fine day.

Also, a skills area will be developed next to one of the pylons where riders can practice jumps, tight corners and riding over logs.



Tumeke Pōneke
Wellington City Council

There are no fences inside the Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park, so if you find yourself confronted by a farm gate or fence, you are about to enter private property - please head back the way you came. To help people keep on the right track, map boards and track markers will be installed in the park around the middle of next year. A map of the existing tracks is shown below.



Access and Parking

There will be at least four access points to Makara Peak: South Karori Road, Makara Hill Rd, St Albans Ave and Allington Road. To ensure park visitors do not compete with residents for parking, a car park has been planned for the South Karori Road entrance. This will be situated on a piece of road reserve between South Karori Stream and South Karori Road (about halfway between the start and end of Hazelwood Ave). The car park has been designed to hold up to 22 cars and will be accompanied by a picnic area on the opposite side of Karori Stream (accessed via a foot bridge). The car park area, which is currently dominated by blackberry and household rubbish, will be landscaped with native plants.



Forest Restoration

150 years ago Makara Peak was cloaked in a virgin podocarp/broadleaf forest rich in birdlife. Today, most of Makara Peak is covered in scrub and pasture, although there are some patches of native forest in the gullies. Under the gorse thousands of native seedlings are taking off and these will eventually overtop the gorse. To speed the process up, volunteer tree planting parties will be held each winter. In fact, thousands of native seedlings have already been planted above Allington Rd over the last few years.

Next winter will see the start of planting of mature forest species in the gullies - trees like kahikatea, tawa, totara, miro and matai. In the long run these should attract kereru (wood pigeon) back to Makara Peak. We will be using squares of old wool carpet as weed mats for some of these plants. If you are throwing out any old carpet please give us a call.

Because of the amount of gorse on Makara Peak, the fire risk will get very high this summer - no smoking in the park please. The park's Makara Hill Rd boundary is a particularly high fire risk due to it's northern exposure and people throwing matches and cigarette butts out of car windows. We will plant that boundary out with fire resistant native species next winter.

T-shirts

We have a small number of Makara Peak t-shirts for sale (\$25 incl GST). They are marl grey and feature a large copy of the Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park logo on the back. If you would like one, send your size, name and address and a cheque for \$25 to 'Makara Peak MTB Park', PO Box 11 310, Wellington. All proceeds will go towards the parks volunteer working bees.

Pest Control

Despite a large goat cull last year, a small number of goats continue to plague the park, merrily destroying native seedlings. Goat shooter, Jon Rosemergy, will patrol the park regularly over spring to keep their numbers down. For safety reasons, casual hunting and motor vehicle use on Makara Peak is prohibited.

Possoms are also slowing down the forest regeneration process. Another volunteer group will set up bait stations in the park at the end of this month. The stations will be set up in trees and dispense poison pellets (brodifacoum) to possums. We plan to supplement this effort with a small 1080 drop in the inaccessible, southern end of the park in late October. Signs will be placed around the effected area when this happens.

If you are having problems with possums, call us and we will lend you a Timms possum trap. Once possum numbers have been reduced, native plants and birds should begin to flourish on Makara Peak

Working Bees

Several work parties have been held over the last few weeks, with turnouts ranging from four to 40. Since June, 2000 native trees have been planted and almost one kilometre of track has been cleared, and the pace is picking up. These have been generously supported by Mainly Tramping, Cactus Climbing, Mud Cycles and Johnsonville Cycles.

Working bees will continue to be held at the park every weekend from now until the middle of December. They are generally held on a Sunday from about 10am till 1pm. Tools are provided and training is given when necessary.

If you have any queries or suggestions regarding the development of Makara Peak, or would like to know more about the volunteer work parties, please contact Makara Peak Park Advocate, Simon Kennett, phone 499 6376. Or check out the Makara Peak discussion group on the web:

<http://www.mountainbike.co.nz>

