



Ohiwa Forest Public Access Review 2025

Ohiwa Forest Management Unit Introduction

Land, Values, Operational Activity and Values Information Summary



NZTM Map Reference: 1 952 425 (mN) - 5 785 377 (mE)

Introduction

Ohiwa Forest is a plantation forest located in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, Whakatane District. The closest town is Whakatane, approximately 6km or a 8 minute drive by road.

Ohiwa Forest is a first rotation forest consisting of 234.9 ha of 1997 YOE (26-year-old) *P. radiata*.

The current Ohiwa Forest is surrounded to the East, North and South by existing Exotic Forest or Indigenous Forest. To the West is a Pastoral Farming operation managed by Ngati Awa Holdings Group Limited.

Across the Taneatua Road where the Whakatāne River flats are dominated by local Dairy or small farm holdings.

Logic Forest Solutions Ltd (LogicFSL) has been engaged as Forest Manager by Ingka Investment Management NZ Limited, and Harvest Manager in the Ohiwa Forest.

Ingka Investment Management NZ Limited is a New Zealand Registered Company with its parent Company based in the Netherlands.

LogicFSL is a 100% New Zealand owned, Gisborne based forest management company providing a range of services to both small woodlot and corporate forest owners primarily in the East Coast region, and more broadly throughout New Zealand.

Ohiwa Forest Physical Characteristics.

The predominant Land Use is Production Forest, 240 Hectares with approximately 117 Hectares Indigenous Forest or Riparian areas.

The geography of Ohiwa Forest can be described as moderately broken, but generally rolling terrain, with short sharp slopes leading into incised gully systems. Small head gully catchments fall either in a Westerly direction, indirectly into the Ohiwa Harbour, or Easterly indirectly into the Whakatane River.

The Catchment has links to important Covenant areas of Ngati Awa and their lands. The forest is fortunate to have large areas of Native Forest protection areas, buffering these catchments.

Cultural values

Whakatāne River, Ohiwa Harbour and all streams, wetlands, swamps, and waterbodies (including drains) in their catchments are culturally significant to Ngāti Awa and its hapū.

Their important relationships with Whakatāne River, Ohiwa Harbour and their tributaries are statutorily acknowledged in the Ngāti Awa Claims Settlement Act 2005 and the Ngati Awa Deeds of Settlement with the Crown.

The river and harbour are important sources of food, provide transport routes, traditional art and craft resources, and resources for ritual uses still practiced today by the Ngati Awa community.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa (the iwi authority and post-settlement governance entity) owns 1176ha to the west of Ohiwa Forest. Ngati Awa Farm is managed by Ngati Awa Group Holdings Limited and carries beef, sheep, and exotic forests. Ngati Awa set aside 113ha in covenanted (Kawenata) area reserved for nature and usefully provides respite space for kiwi and other species during forest harvest operations. The Kawenata is able to be used for specified land uses.

As an outcome of settlement, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa also holds rights of access to noho (camp) at Ohineteraraku Scenic Reserve, northwest of Ohiwa Forest.

These settlement outcomes attest to the longstanding and enduring occupation of the area by Ngati Awa people at various habitation sites across the landscape between Whakatāne River and Ohiwa Harbour and beyond, all of which is the homeland of the Ngāti Awa people.

Ngati Awa and their hapu continue to be actively involved in the management of Whakatāne River, Ohiwa Harbour, and Ohineteraraku Scenic Reserve today.

Hundreds of sites are recorded, and many more are not yet identified in the landscape, many of which extend into the Ohiwa Forest. Ohiwa Forest owners are committed to seeking further archaeological and cultural information to inform their forest management activities and public access decision-making.

The landowners plan to engage with Ngati Awa to assess and identify methods for the protection of significant sites, mitigation of forestry effects on waterbodies and other ancestral taonga and incorporate this into Forest Management Plans and landowner policy for minimising adverse impacts that can occur through the provision of Public Access.

Appreciation of the Cultural aspects within this forest are very important to the forest owners.

Biodiversity values

The Ohiwa Forest area contains Kiwi.

A Kiwi management plan for Ohiwa Forest is in place that outlines the actions that will be taken to conserve and recover kiwi in the forest prior to and during the harvesting planned in the forest block commencing November 2023. The plan has been developed by Logic Forest Solutions Ltd in consultation with the Whakatane Kiwi Trust and other stakeholders. There are also Weka and Ruru (Morepork) in large numbers and many songbirds.

Logic Forest Management commenced Stream Health Monitoring within the forest in November 2023.

An Ecologist has been engaged to undertake Assessments of potential reserve areas, develop plan, and implement and monitor restoration of these areas. Other biodiversity Programs could evolve from this information.

Operational Plans

The main Operational management objectives for the next five years are:

- Construction of roads and landings for the progressing harvest
- Continuation of log harvesting
- Replant
- Work in conjunction with Whakatāne Kiwi Trust in protecting and surveying Kiwi in the forest.
- Implementation of Cultural Assessment Recommendations into management plans.
- Work with Pest Control groups on control and eradication programs.
- Continue Ecological Management programs as developed.

Pest Management

Whakatāne Kiwi Trust Pest carry out Predator Control Monitoring and Control Operations around and within the forest.

Te Rungana o Ngati Awa (TRONP), as a neighbour, and Stakeholder carry out extensive Predator Control Programs.

The Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa's carry out low intensity large mammal control as needed in the forest and the meat is used for social needs.

Both of these operations need a secure environment to operate in and meet their goals.

Hunting

Recreational (if any) hunting is being managed via Logic's permit access system and issued as required. We would also advise:

- No camping or fires to be permitted within the forest.
- No forest access will be issued in times of High Fire Risk.
- No forest access will be granted whilst forest operations are undertaken in the forest.
- No dogs allowed AT ALL within Ohiwa Forest

Currently, due to trespass issues risking Health and Safety and theft, Hunting is closed to all but the Forest Owners and Managers Staff, and pest control operators

2024 Affected Party Questionnaire and Submission.

In June 2024 Logic Forest Solutions consulted on potential public access options for the Forest block at 121 Taneatua Road.

Logic Forest Solutions are the Forest Manager on behalf of Ingka Investments New Zealand Ltd.

The survey gathered information on the interest in public access to the forest, and the factors that parties value or are aware of existing in the forest.

We also gathered information on how public access could impact or enhance these values.

2024 Outcome for Public Access

The 2024 outcome settled on that given the high activity period the forest is currently in it would be difficult to allow Public Access in 2024.

There were obvious concerns and risk associated with the active forest operations.

There were concerns around risks to the Biodiversity operations.

And there were concerns from neighbouring landowners around increasing access through their properties.

Local Iwi Ngati Awa are undertook a Cultural Values Assessment of the forest as it believes there are sites of interest likely to be within the forest. They had some concerns around potential damage to these and privacy around discoveries.

Given all those factors it was unreasonable to attempt any public access in 2024.

Logic Forest Solutions and the Forest Owner, Ingka Investments did resolve that it would be reasonable to initiate discussions with those in favour of public access to receive their more detailed initial proposals and work with them on refining them with a view towards potential implementation when the forest activities scale down.

2025 Review of Public Access

In reviewing if there is any change to the risks to values already highlighted in the 2024 consultation, we can report the following.

The new timeline for Forest Operations indicates it will extend for 9 months longer than initially expected.

There may be a further delay due to a neighbouring roading and harvesting program we will need to work with.

Biodiversity operations are increasing with an intense predator monitoring and control plan underway with assets within the forest providing important information to organisations involved in conservation.

LFSL and the Forest owner have been working with Whakatane District Council and interested parties to coordinate what can be undertaken in the forest following the closure of harvest operations. This is to have work underway to action any plans at that time.

With those factors in mind there will be no change in Public Access

Logic FSL envisage the revised timeline towards a more open access policy.

2025 Winter – 2026 Winter; There will be no change to public access while Roadline Clearance and Road Construction and Clearfell operations continue.

2026 Autumn; Discuss with parties in favour of Public Access (notably Mountain Bike Interests and Whakatane District Council) how their proposal will work in practicality in the forest. Including timelines, and measures to mitigate concerns and risk highlighted by others in this consultation.

2026 Spring – end of harvest operations; refine any practical plans for access with formal parties, and smaller groups, for a potential change in access arrangements when forest operations taper off.

Forest Owner Aspirations

Ingka Investments NZ Ltd have clear aspirations of land ownership which involves public access and will work with Logic Forest Solutions and the public to enable, where practical, at the right time, and satisfying the risk factors mentioned in this summary. There is a willingness for a well-structured access policy to be supported by the Forest Owner.

Next Review

LFSL will review Public Access again in July 2026