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**CONSERVATION OF THE PAE O TE RANGI AREA
New Zealand Case Study on Biodiversity Incentive Measures**

by Gerard Hutching

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FOREWORD

This paper is one of a series of 22 case studies that describe practical experiences in OECD Member countries with the use of incentive measures for the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components. These case studies were submitted by OECD Member countries to the OECD Working Group on Economic Aspects of Biodiversity as a contribution to the OECD study of the design and implementation of appropriate incentive measures for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. In order to ensure maximum comparability between the case studies, all were developed under the common methodology described in “Incentive Measures to Promote the Conservation and the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity: Framework for Case Studies” [OECD/GD(97)125].

The practical experiences described in the 22 case studies were used as the basis for the policy advice developed in the *Handbook of Incentive Measures for Biodiversity: Design and Implementation* (OECD, 1999). This *Handbook* combines the lessons learned through the various experiences described in the case studies – covering a wide range of ecosystems, economic pressures on biodiversity, and utilising various incentive measures – with sound economic theory to develop a practical, step-by-step guide for policy-makers on the design and implementation of successful incentive measures for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

This paper was provided by the New Zealand Government and was written by Gerard Hutching. It is released as an unclassified document under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD with the aim of bringing information on this subject to the attention of a wider audience.

This study, and the other 21 case studies submitted by Member countries, are available on the world wide web at <http://www.oecd.org/env>.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case study examines the joint purchase in 1993 of forested lands in the Pae O Te Rangi area by the New Zealand government's heritage fund and two local authorities for conversion into a reserve. Previously, the Maori tribe had privately owned these lands and large areas had been logged and converted to sheep and cattle farming and horticultural uses. These activities were encouraged up until 1984 by direct subsidies for land clearance and agricultural market price support, as well as tax disincentives and support to road infrastructure. However, in recent years the property was no longer economically viable as a farm and there was an intention to subdivide it into small blocks to sell for development purposes. In order to prevent this, and under pressure from local interest groups, the land was purchased for conversion into a reserve instead. Stakeholders were involved in the process, and the plans were supported by the Maori tribe who previously owned the lands. In 1990 a Forest Heritage Fund was created to support the voluntary undertaking of sustainable forestry practices on private lands with compensation offered to those who are no longer allowed to log.

Ecosystem studied: forests

Incentive measures used: property purchase, access restrictions, adverse incentives removal, environmental fund

Main lessons learned: Dealings with private land owners must be fair and transparent; NGOs can be useful in identifying areas for protection and pressuring key players to protect them; it can help to use a third party (outside of local authority) to purchase the land if negotiations are difficult; the development of strict criteria for forest purchases by independent bodies is necessary.

1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

1.1 Description of the ecosystem

Pae o te Rangi is a 322 hectare block of land on the northern flanks of the Waitakere Ranges, 30 km from downtown Auckland, New Zealand's largest city with over 1 million people. It rises to a height of 290 m above sea level and consists of a combination of regenerating and old growth forest. Adjacent to the property lies the Cascade-Kauri Park, part of the Waitakere Ranges Regional Parkland, an area of outstanding natural, scenic, scientific and recreational value. Before its recent purchase for a reserve, Pae o te Rangi had been part of the local indigenous tribe's rohe (tribal area), and in recent historical times had been in private ownership for more than 100 years, with some areas of it farmed.

1.2 Description of main impacts

The main impacts on the biodiversity of the area have been early European logging, agricultural development, housing and the depredations of plant and animal pests.

1.3 Identification of incentive measure

The incentive measure was purchase of the property by three organisations: the New Zealand Government's Forest Heritage Fund, the Auckland Regional Council and the Waitakere City Council.

1.4 Identification of economic sector targeted by incentive measure

The primary production sector, particularly extensive farming and indigenous and exotic plantation forestry.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF CAUSES AND SOURCES OF PRESSURES

2.1 Identification of sectoral activities and resulting pressures through:

Conversion and land use

Since the 19th century the Waitakere Ranges have been logged extensively, the giant kauri highly sought after for ships' spars, boat building and for housing. Large tracts were also converted to sheep and cattle farming and horticulture.

Pae o te Rangi has a history of private ownership going back more than 100 years and was the last property of significant size containing natural values still in private hands in the region. Historically known as "Sheeplands", prior to its purchase by the Forest Heritage Fund, it had been managed as a farm by the same owners for 25 years. Because the land was no longer an economic farming unit, in the late 1980s the property's farmer-owners tried to sell it, but under the District Scheme for the region it could not be subdivided; as a result buyers were not forthcoming. The owners then appealed to the Planning Tribunal against the District Scheme, seeking to subdivide the property into small 'lifestyle' blocks, some of 4 ha in size, others of 20 ha. In 1992 the Planning Tribunal allowed a change in zoning so that the property could be subdivided. In total, 50 new dwellings would have been allowed to be built. Under the zoning, up to 35% of a site could be cleared of forest. If an owner could show that it is necessary for farming, more than 35% of forest could be cleared.

The effects of subdivision would have been to seriously compromise the natural character of the area. The impact of clearing building sites, together with the construction of the road infrastructure would have been the most visible immediate effects of subdivision. The subtle effects were also identified - domestic predatory pets, higher density of grazing animals, escaped garden plants, the construction of at least two buildings on each site and extensive networks of fencing with associated forest clearance for fence lines. The combination of these effects would have seriously degraded the landscape, wildlife, botanical and remote experience values of the area.

As a result of the Planning Tribunal decision, a joint offer to purchase the property was made in 1993.

Non-sustainable use of biological diversity

Historically Pae o te Rangi and its environs underwent a huge loss of biodiversity when most of its marketable timber was logged in the 1920s. This impacted on wildlife species such as kaka and parakeets (avifauna) which no longer had the large trees they required for feeding and nesting. During the

same period extensive forest clearance over the entire Waitakere Ranges led to the local extinction of eight species of forest birds, including the North Island brown kiwi.

2.2 Identification of underlying causes of biodiversity loss

Missing markets or non-existent property rights

For much of its recent history Pae o te Rangi has been valued more for the economic benefits derived from agricultural development than for its biodiversity. Only in recent decades has an awareness arisen of the values, especially economic, that may be derived from biodiversity. For example, New Zealand tourism is largely predicated on its environment, with 70% of overseas tourists stating they wish to visit a national park or reserve during their stay. Special guided tours to view whales or penguins are significant income earners. The Waitakere Ranges, of which Pae o te Rangi forms a part, is the closest wilderness area to Auckland and receives 1.2 million visitors a year. The Cascade/Kauri area, which Pae o te Rangi adjoins, was visited by 100 000 people in 1992, with numbers growing each year.

Information failure

Information about the value of the biodiversity of the area has existed for sometime, although the owners might not have been fully aware of this and thus not acted on it. Equally the purchasers might not have appreciated the circumstances of the owners (for example farming economics, economic need, requirement to subdivide). Only in the last two decades has intensive research been carried out in New Zealand on the habitat requirements of wildlife. Some research has been carried out on New Zealand plants as pools for genetic resources.

Institutional failure

Until the creation of the Forest Heritage Fund in 1990, there was inadequate means of protecting private forest in New Zealand. Most of the publicly-owned land in contention had been protected by that date but 1.2 million ha of indigenous forest remained in private hands. When the Government introduced its Indigenous Forestry Policy in 1990, it established voluntary protection mechanisms to ensure logging of privately-owned forests would be sustainable, including controls over how much forest could be logged in a given area. The contestable Forest Heritage Fund was set up as a means of compensating those land owners who could no longer exercise their former rights to log their forests. To date it has protected more than 100 000 ha of land.

2.3 Identification of adverse incentives, including:

Direct and indirect subsidies

Historically New Zealand has had various systems of subsidies, particularly in relation to land use, which have led to a loss of biological biodiversity. Most of these have now ended. Up until 1984 two subsidies encouraged farmers to clear their land of indigenous forest: the Land Development Encouragement Loan (LDEL) scheme and the Forestry Encouragement Grant (FEG) scheme. In the 10 year period up until 1984, more than 300 000 ha of indigenous forest, shrubland and grassland was destroyed under the LDEL regime, while the FEG scheme saw more than 30 000 ha of indigenous forest replaced by plantations.

Market price supports

Also up until 1984 the New Zealand Government administered a Supplementary Minimum Price (SMP) scheme, by which the Government paid farmers a minimum price for their farm produce, should their return fall below a certain level. This had a distorting effect on farming, encouraging farmers to increase stock levels and destroy forest on marginal land, despite a lack of demand in the market for produce.

Tax disincentives

In the past one of the barriers to the protection of forest on private land in New Zealand has been the charging of rates (property taxes) on land, whether it is "improved" or not. Often these charges, collected by the local council, are the deciding issue for financially-pressed owners not to protect their forests. In the 1980s, under pressure from environmental NGOs, some local bodies reviewed their rating policies so that today a growing proportion waive rates on areas of native forest, and correspondingly the area of protected private forest has increased.

Infrastructure provision

New Zealand administrations have traditionally had a policy of providing roads into distant areas, and spreading the cost over the whole community. In some instances large tracts of land, which should never have been developed for farming, have been developed, and the actual costs have been hidden. Similarly, electricity has been widely distributed in distant areas, failing to reflect the costs to people living there.

3. IMPACTS ON THE ECOSYSTEM

The Pae o te Rangi property is made up of a number of landscape/ecological units. These are influenced by the good conditions for native forest and shrubland establishment, low fertility volcanic loams, a moderate rainfall (1200-1500 mm a year) spread evenly throughout the year, and a northerly aspect.

3.1 Impacts on genetic and species diversity

The New Zealand environment is a highly modified one as a result of the impact of Polynesian (around 1 000 years ago) and European settlement (late 18th century onwards). In the period following the arrival and expansion of Maori, forest cover was reduced from 85% to about 50%, and some 34 bird species became extinct. Following European settlement the rate of change increased. The region surrounding Pae o te Rangi was rich in kauri and broadleaf forests, but by the 20th century most kauri had been logged and the forests cleared for farming.

3.2 Impact on wildlife

Parts of the property have been ranked as high value wildlife habitat by a recent Auckland regional Council Protected Natural Areas survey. Native birdlife includes the forest pigeon, the tui (a honeyeater), North Island tomtit, the forest parrot the kaka, the morepork (an owl), kingfisher, shining cuckoo, grey warbler, fantail and the silvereye. Some of these species, such as the grey warbler, silvereye, fantail and kingfisher, are relatively common, but others such as the kaka are rare.

The high quality forest areas in the block are important for the forest pigeon because they contain many fruit-bearing trees, with a year-round supply of fruit. By contrast with the other already reserved areas of forest, the newly protected forest has a larger proportion of forest-fruited trees.

Two lizards becoming increasingly rare in the region are the Auckland green gecko and the copper skink. These are in good numbers in the kanuka forest and shrublands.

Open areas along the forest and in grassland are habitat for six other native bird species: the New Zealand pipit, Australasian harrier, pukeko, welcome swallow, white-faced heron and the spur-winged plover. In addition, 17 introduced bird species are present throughout the forest, shrubland and grassland areas of the block.

3.3 Potential of the forest for wildlife

Now the livestock have been removed from the forest, the fruit-bearing secondary succession trees are rapidly regenerating and the canopy trees are showing better signs of survival. The increase in food supplies is beneficial to native birds, insects and reptiles.

The area is now being considered as a site to re-introduce native bird species that used to occur in the ranges. These include the brown kiwi, North Island weka, rifleman, whitehead, North Island robin and bellbird.

A \$NZ 3 million Regional Council programme to control the introduced feral possum (in 1998, and continued on a long term basis) should substantially improve the habitat for native birdlife, and possum-browsed plants such as native mistletoes which have become locally extinct.

4. IMPACTS ON ECONOMY AND WELFARE

4.1 Direct economic losses

The protection of Pae o te Rangi has had few adverse economic impacts on the local land development and house building industry.

4.2 Economic valuation of damages to public goods (if applicable)

The proposed subdivision of Pae o te Rangi was likely to have placed additional pressures on the existing road infrastructure, telephone and electricity networks and biodiversity values of the adjacent parkland (from the presence of additional predatory animals.)

4.3 Effects of adverse incentives on budget, efficiency and employment

The loss of short term employment opportunities during land development, house building and servicing have been offset by lower but sustainable employment in the public park management sector, and private recreation and park service providers.

4.4 Beneficiaries of inaction and bearers of costs prior to implementation

The public was the main beneficiary of inaction, but these benefits were borne by financial losses by the land owner and the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, which litigated for 12 years to prevent subdivision of the land.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF INCENTIVE MEASURE(S) AND CONTEXT

5.1 Identification of actual or planned incentive measure

Category of measure

The implementation measure used for the case study was outright purchase of the property through a three-way funding mechanism, involving central government (via the New Zealand Forest Heritage Fund), regional government (via the Auckland Regional Council) and local government (via the Waitakere City Council).

Objective of the incentive measure and reason for choosing the measure

The objective of the incentive measure was to ensure the land would be administered by an organisation whose raison d'être is the protection of forest. It also ensured that the forest would not suffer from fragmentation; if it had been placed in multiple ownership (a real possibility), its protection would have been less secure.

5.2 Process of implementation and distributional effects

Pae o te Rangi was first identified as a likely addition to the protected areas of the Waitakere Ranges as early as 1950. During the proceeding years it continued to be marked out as the last major natural area in the Waitakeres that remained with inadequate protection. In 1989, in response to a call from the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society, the Auckland Regional Parks service and the Waitakere City Council again identified the area as a key one for protection (as noted in the 1992 Waitakere Ranges Regional Parkland Management Plan). While there has been a loss of biodiversity in some respects during this protracted period, in recent years the property had become uneconomic as a farm, and regeneration of the native forest was occurring.

Beneficiaries of incentive measure and bearers of cost after implementation

The beneficiaries of the incentive measure were the former owners who received a fair market price for the property and the public who can now enjoy the knowledge that an important area of biodiversity has now been protected and the biodiversity potential of the Waitakere Ranges has been enhanced. Direct beneficiaries include recreationalists who can now access an area that was once private property. The bearers of the costs of implementation were New Zealand taxpayers (through their support of the Forest Heritage Fund), and ratepayers represented by the Auckland Regional Council and the

Waitakere City Council. The bearers of the ongoing costs of implementation were the ratepayers represented by the Auckland Regional Council.

Participation and negotiation

The public, through these last two politically accountable organisations, was able to have its say over the acquisition. In fact, the impetus for the purchase in the 1990s originally came from two public interest groups, the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society and the Maruia Society. The Maruia Society researched and prepared the case for protecting Pae o te Rangi and secured the support of the three funding organisations. Negotiations took place between a single negotiator from the Forest Heritage Fund representing all the parties, on the one hand, and the owners on the other.

The process of implementation related closely to other conservation initiatives. From a national point of view, the Forest Heritage Fund, established in 1990, has a clear view of priorities for forest protection. Proposals for protection must meet the following criteria: they must be representative; sustainable; have landscape integrity; and provide educational, recreational and tourist amenities. The Fund has prepared, and is in the process of preparing, a series of reports to identify areas that are high priorities for protection.

In the wider Auckland region, the Auckland Regional Council administers a network of regional parks which are among the most popular in the country, being so close to the largest populated area in the country. As well as catering to recreation, the Council has comprehensive conservation programmes, including plant and animal pest management and the rescue of endangered species.

Waitakere City Council describes itself as an 'Eco-city' and has a commitment to preserving natural areas.

Enforcement and compliance

Once Pae o te Rangi became a reserve the land became subject to a number of protective laws including the Conservation Act, the Resource Management Act and the Wildlife Act. These place restrictions on activities of the public in such areas, and place the onus on authorities to safeguard them.

5.3 The role of information and uncertainty in the implementation process

As was pointed out in the landmark New Zealand Ministry for the Environment publication *The State of New Zealand's Environment 1997*, much information is lacking about aspects of the environment. As an example, until the 1990s an accurate census of the flightless kiwi population had never been carried out within the country.

Information about biodiversity value and environmental impacts

In the case of Pae o te Rangi, a significant amount of information existed relating to the biodiversity value of the forest and this was supplemented by an extensive forest survey by Maruia Society staff. This helped to make a compelling case for its protection. The information about the Waitakere Ranges generally came from an Auckland Regional Council-sponsored Protected Natural Area (PNA) survey of the forest in 1989.

Information about economic impacts

No quantification of the economic impacts of land development, house building and infrastructure was provided during the implementation process. However these were likely to have been outweighed by less pressure on roads, improved stormwater run-off, greater opportunities for people to visit the park, and sustainable farm management of the grassed areas.

Technical information

Technical information on land valuation, costs of subdivision and land development, forest, wildlife, landscape and recreation values was provided during the implementation process.

Cultural (indigenous) knowledge

The Maori iwi (tribe) for the Waitakere Ranges, Te Kawarau a Maki, supported the purchase of the land and identified the correct name for the land - Pae o te Rangi. A good deal is known and has been recorded of the cultural knowledge of the forest, especially the traditional use of plants for food and as medicine.

5.4 Framework and context of implementation***Explicit legal framework, property and use rights (formal constraints)***

Pae o te Rangi now is legally protected in perpetuity and in public ownership, forming part of the neighbouring Cascade-Kauri Park, which in turn is part of the Waitakere Ranges Regional Parkland. As a protected area administered by the Auckland Regional Council, the forest is subject to a number of constraints against degradation of its biodiversity, which are prescribed in the operative management plan. For example, no logging or disturbance to the forest and shrubland biodiversity may be carried out and there is an expectation that the Council will enhance the forest by carrying out plant and animal pest control, excluding farm animals and managing recreation.

Cultural, historical and social context (social constraints)

Now that Pae o te Rangi has been formally protected, the opportunity exists for groups which have been hitherto excluded from participating in the management of the forest, to be included. This includes local environmental groups, the local community, the indigenous Maori community and other recreation groups.

Institutions concerned (including appropriate government level)

The Auckland Regional Council administers Pae o te Rangi, as the land-owning agency. Both the Auckland Regional Council and Waitakere City Council exercise constraints over land and water use under the Resource Management Act. The Department of Conservation exercises some powers under the Wildlife Act.

Internal evaluation and remedial process

The operative management plan for Pae o te Rangi is being reviewed in 1998, along with the management plan for the entire Waitakere Ranges Regional Parkland. Plans are reviewed on a five-yearly basis, with other functional plans and reviews also being conducted. The planning process includes significant public, community and government agency involvement.

6. POLICY RELEVANT CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Lessons learned

The protection of Pae o te Rangi came about through a strategic move by two NGOs, which showed an ability to research and prepare a case for protecting the forest. They then secured the support of the Forest Heritage Fund, the Auckland Regional Council and Waitakere City Council. The government bodies had the finance and the negotiating skills to complete the purchase.

Several important lessons can be learned from the experience:

- The importance of dealing with landowners fairly and transparently. Frequently there is a tendency for landowners to view agencies of the State or local councils as being ready or able to offer a higher price to protect an area than the area might be worth on the open market. In that context, the Forest Heritage Fund has this to say: "In the face of protection demands far exceeding its resources, the Fund has resisted pressures to pay excessive sums to protect lands and refused to purchase lands of low conservation value."
- The usefulness of a third party in land purchase. In the case of Pae o te Rangi, negotiations between the local bodies and the landowners had stalled, and the Forest Heritage Fund acted as a catalyst to renew the negotiations. This fresh initiative coming from a party with no prior relationship with the landowners proved invaluable.
- The usefulness of NGOs in identifying areas for protection and pressuring key players to protect them.
- The importance of organisations such as the Forest Heritage Fund having a clear vision and strict criteria for forest purchases. The key to the success of the Fund is the fact it has stuck to the criteria originally drawn up for buying land. Besides focusing on rare and threatened areas, the Fund has also concentrated on buying sustainable forest - in other words a large property adjacent to a national park has a higher priority than a 10 hectare forest in the midst of farmland. The success of the Fund to date speaks for itself: more than 100 000 ha of forest has been protected at a cost of \$NZ 26.5 million since 1990.

6.2 Transferability of the experience

The case is a good example of the need for government agencies and NGOs to work co-operatively on biodiversity protection projects, recognising each other's strength and weaknesses in

achieving a common outcome. Because of their diverse statutory roles, government bodies do not always have the ability to divert staff resources to the assessment of biodiversity in specific areas that may come on to the real estate market. Protection opportunities for private land cannot be predicted within the one-to-three-year time frame of government agencies, while NGOs have more flexibility with their staffing resources. Government agencies have access to reserved funds and loans for biodiversity protection, whereas NGOs have to rely on public subscriptions, which take time to raise.

6.3 Possible advice

Government agencies and NGOs should work co-operatively on biodiversity protection projects. All bodies need to continually monitor prospective lands for biodiversity conservation to assess the best time to execute protective measures and the best mix of resources necessary to achieve this.

OECD Case Studies on the Design and Implementation of Incentive Measures for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

All case studies are available on the OECD Internet Site at: <http://www.oecd.org/env>

Country	Case study title
Australia	A Revolving Fund for Biodiversity Conservation in Australia
Austria	Austrian Case Study on Economic Incentive Measures in the Creation of the National Park Neusiedler See - Seewinkel: Summary
Austria	The Austrian Programme on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Agriculture: Experiences and Consequences of Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Austrian Agriculture
Canada	Revealing the Economic Value of Biodiversity: A New Incentive Measure to Conserve and Protect It
Canada	Using the Income Tax Act of Canada to Promote Biodiversity and Sensitive Lands Conservation
Denmark	Economic Incentives for the Transformation of Privately Cultivated Forest Areas into Strict (Untouched) Forest Reserves
Finland	The Act of the Financing of Sustainable Forestry and the Development of Forest Certification
France	A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Biodiversity Conservation Programmes in the Garonne Valley
Germany	UNESCO Biosphere Reserves Schorfheide-Chorin and Rhön
Greece	Incentives for the Conservation of the Nesting Grounds of the Sea Turtle <i>Caretta caretta</i> in Laganas Bay, Zakynthos, Greece
Japan	The Case of Oze Area: Case Study on the Japanese Experience Concerning Economic Aspects of Conserving Biodiversity
Korea	Case Study on Korean Experiences Relating to the Conservation of Biodiversity in Mount Chiri, with Special Attention to the Poaching of Bears
Mexico	Incitations Economiques pour la Protection des Espèces de la Vie Sauvage au Mexique: Le cas de l'Espèce <i>Ovis canadensis</i>
Netherlands	Green Investment Funds: Organic Farming
Netherlands	Green Investment Funds: PIM Project
New Zealand	Conservation of the Pae O Te Rangī Area
Norway	Valuation of Benefits Connected to Conservation or Improvement of Environmental Quality in Local Watercourses in Norway
Poland	Case Study on the Polish Experiences Relating to the Implementation of Economic Incentive Measures to Promote the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Biebrza Valley, with Special Attention to the Biebrza National Park
Turkey	The Development of Appropriate Methods for Community Forestry in Turkey
UK	Heathland Management in the UK
US	US Experiences with Incentive Measures to Promote the Conservation of Wetlands
US	Individual Transferable Quotas as an Incentive Measure for the Conservation and the Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity