

Before the Fast-track Panel

Under: Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

In the matter of: FTAA-2603-L003 – Tukituki Water Security Project – Land Exchange

Statement of advice: Michael Harbrow

Recreation

DOC staff

31 August 2026



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

Introduction

1. My full name is Michael Andrew Harbrow.

Instruction

2. I have been requested to provide expert advice to the Director-General of Conservation for his section 35 land exchange report required to be prepared under the Fast-Track Approvals Act 2024, for the Tukituki Water Security Project land exchange application.

Qualification and experience

3. I am a Senior Visitor Advisor for the Department of Conservation (DOC) working from Whare Kaupapa Atawhai / Conservation House in Wellington. I have a Bachelor of Science in Plant and Microbial Sciences from the University of Canterbury (1998), a Master of Science in Zoology from the University of Canterbury (2001) and a Post Graduate Certificate in Resource Studies with Distinction from Lincoln University (2009). I have seventeen years' experience providing recreation and tourism advice for DOC including ten years' experience as a Visitor Advisor and seven years' experience as a Social Science Advisor.
4. My role in this project to date has included review of application documents, including the Applicant's Recreation Assessment and other supporting information.

Code of conduct

5. Whilst it is acknowledged this is not an Environment Court Proceeding, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. I have complied with the Code of Conduct in the preparation of this advice. Unless I state otherwise, this advice is within my area of expertise, and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

Scope of advice and expert opinion

6. My expert advice relates to the following:
 - a. Adequacy of the Applicant's assessment of the recreation values of the land that is proposed for exchange, including identification of any values that have not been assessed or have been insufficiently characterised.
 - b. The extent to which the proposed land exchange would enhance or diminish the values of the conservation estate, where this pertains to recreational values.
 - c. The extent of any health and safety obligations and costs that DOC might incur in relation to recreational visitors, as a result of the proposed land exchange.
 - d. Matters raised by submitters in relation to the recreation values of the land that is proposed to be exchanged.
7. Two scenarios have been considered in preparing advice on this application:
 - a. Scenario One considers the value of the land as it is now.
 - b. Scenario Two considers the value of the land, should the land exchange go ahead. This scenario includes any relevant mitigation or offsetting that relates to the land that would be received by DOC, and any positive or negative impacts of inundation, where they relate to that land.

Material Considered

8. In preparing this advice I have reviewed the following documents as part of the land exchange application:
 - a. Ruataniwha Water Storage Scheme Recreation Assessment
 - b. Exchange of Land Overview Report
 - c. Land Exchange Assessment

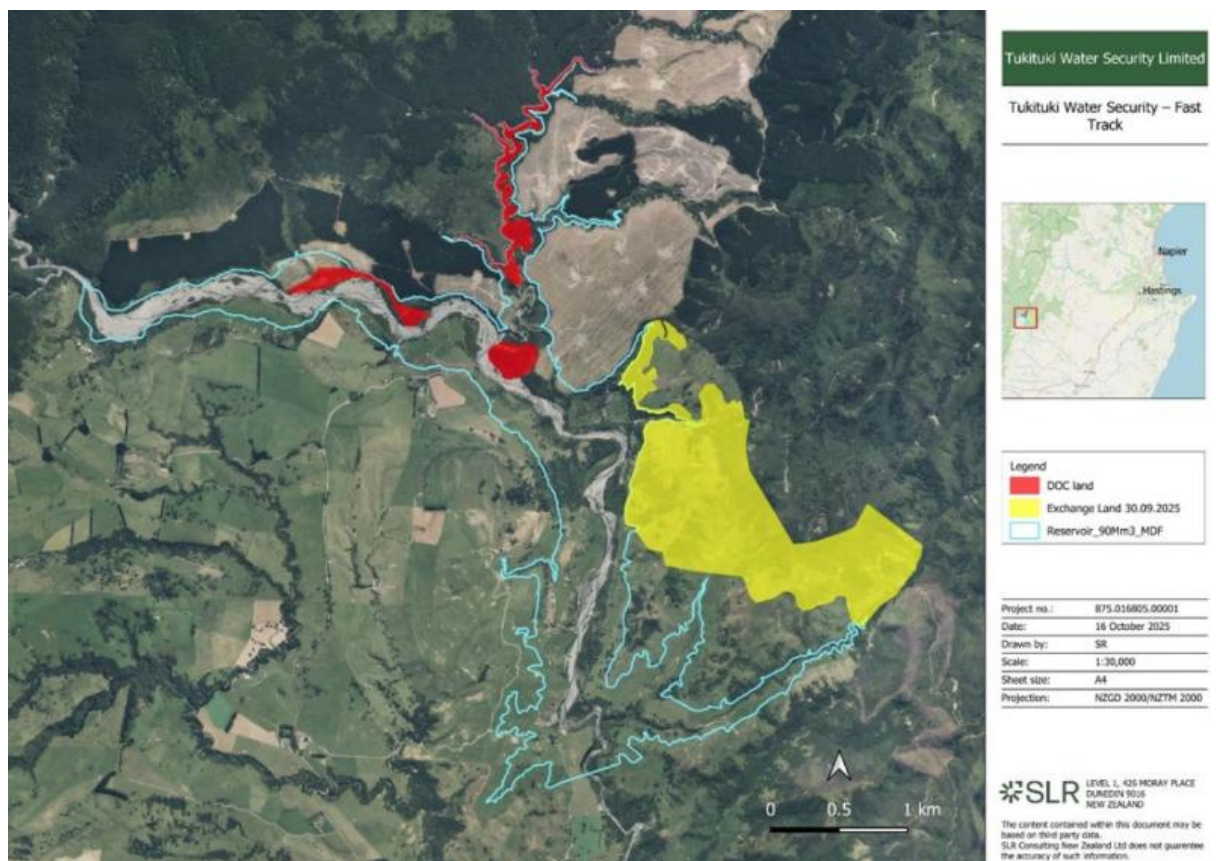
d. Invited Comments Response Package

9. I undertook a site visit to the DOC-Get land on 16 June 2026.

Summary of proposal

10. Tukituki Water Security Limited (TWSL) are seeking a land exchange under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA). The proposed exchange would see approximately 29.7 ha of conservation land within Ruahine Forest Park, bordering the Makaroro River and a tributary known as Dutch Creek, transferred to TWSL. Approximately 170 ha of Smedley Station land, adjoining the Gwavas Conservation Area, would be transferred to the conservation estate (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Location of the Tukituki Water Security Project and proposed land exchange (source: Exchange of Land Overview Report, Mitchell Daysh)



11. The 170 ha Smedley Exchange Block, referred to as the “DOC-Get” land, is predominantly hill country comprising indigenous forest, exotic pasture,

indigenous scrub and shrubland and four small streams. The land is currently part of Smedley Station. It is held by Public Trust and managed by the Station under the Howard Estate Act 1978 for the purpose of providing a cadet training farm.

12. In exchange for this land, approximately 29.7 ha of public conservation land (PCL) comprising indigenous forest and shrubland adjacent to the Makaroro River and along Dutch Creek, would be transferred to the Applicant. This land is referred to as the “DOC-Give” land.
13. The land exchange would enable construction of a proposed 83 m high dam across the Makaroro River and creation of an approximately 7 km long reservoir with a surface area of approximately 372 ha. If approved, the land exchange is proposed to take place within two years of construction of the dam commencing (tentatively before 31 December 2030).
14. The development, known as the Tukituki Water Security Project, is listed under Schedule 2 of the FTAA. The FTAA requires that the land exchange application is assessed by the Director General of Conservation, before a substantive application can be made for the wider project.
15. The Applicant holds existing consents for the dam and reservoir that were issued for the previous Ruataniwha Water Storage Scheme. This scheme did not go ahead as the decision on the previous land exchange application was overturned by the Supreme Court in 2017, however, the lapse dates of these consents were extended by the relevant councils in April 2026. These consents, along with relevant conditions, relate to the construction of the dam, not the land exchange. Consent conditions are considered under Scenario Two, but only where they relate to the recreation values of the DOC-Get land.
16. The application excludes some areas of Crown marginal strip within the footprint of the proposed reservoir, that are currently managed by the Department. These areas are not included in the application or assessed in this report, as the Applicant expects that the marginal strip would transfer to the margins of the new reservoir, once formed.

Recreational setting

17. The project area is located along the Makaroro River adjoining the north eastern section of Ruahine Forest Park and the Gwavas Conservation Area.
18. The DOC-Give land is part of Ruahine Forest Park (the Park), one of five forest parks managed by the Department of Conservation that protect habitat and provide valued recreation opportunities across the mountainous “central spine” of the lower North Island. The Park covers approximately 95,000 ha in and around the Ruahine Ranges between the Hawke’s Bay and Manawatū / Whanganui Regions, and is easily accessed from urban centres in the central and lower North Island.
19. There are approximately 650 km of tramping tracks or routes within the Park and 60 Department of Conservation huts. These range from basic bivvies to larger serviced huts, which are predominantly used by hunters and trampers. Sunrise Hut is the most popular visitor experience with approximately 3,000 overnight visitors in 2024/25.¹ The key tracks and huts around the project area are outlined at point 26, below.
20. The Park has 21 formal public access points that are maintained by DOC, including 16 on the Eastern (Hawkes’ Bay) side of the Park (see Ruahine Forest Park Access Map attached as Appendix 1). There are up to 56 other potential access routes where access may involve negotiation with adjoining private landowners and / or access across unformed legal roads.²
21. Hunting is a valued activity within the Park. Between 2020 and 2024, the Department issued an average of 4882 hunting permits each year for Ruahine Forest Park. Approximately 5% of hunting permits issued for the North Island open hunting areas in 2024 were for Ruahine Forest Park. Red deer are the main species of wild deer found in the Park. Sika and fallow deer also occur, but are much less common.³

¹ Department of Conservation Booking System

² Department of Conservation (2026). *Ruahine Forest Park Adaptive Wild Deer Management Plan 2025 - 2030*. <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/biodiversity/ruahine-deer-management-plan.pdf>

³ Department of Conservation (2026). *Ruahine Forest Park Adaptive Wild Deer Management Plan 2025 - 2030*.

22. Fishing occurs within Ruahine Forest Park and on the rivers that drain from it. The Tukituki, Tutaekuri and Waipawa Rivers, which have their headwaters within the Park, are among the most popular rivers for angling in Hawke's Bay. These rivers accounted for 21,058 of the total 32,990 angler-days estimated for the Hawke's Bay region for 2021/22.⁴

Recreation opportunities around the project area

23. The Upper Tukituki and Makaroro catchment is valued by anglers for its backcountry character, fishing quality, sense of remoteness, the relative lack of fishing pressure and as a place where people can continue longstanding family or social traditions.⁵ The reported level of fishing in the Makaroro itself is relatively low however, with just 96 angling days reported in 2021/22.⁶
24. The Makaroro River corridor is a regionally significant four wheel drive opportunity. It is accessed from the Wakarara Road-end or surrounding private land, and provides *"one of the few challenging areas in Hawke's Bay suitable for use in summer."*⁷ Four wheel drive access supports hunting, fishing and tramping access in the wider catchment.
25. The 2,700 ha Gwavas Conservation Area, adjacent to the DOC-Get land and incorporating much of the Wakarara Range, contains one Department of Conservation backcountry hut and an associated tramping track. The area is primarily used for hunting and from 2017 – 2025 permits were issued for an average of 55 hunters per year.
26. While there are no facilities on the DOC-Give land, DOC manages several tracks and huts in the vicinity of the project area that are accessed from the Wakarara Road-end (Figure 2). These include:

⁴ Stoffels, R. & Unwin, M. (2023). Angler usage of New Zealand lake and river fisheries: Results from the 2021/22 National Angler Survey. Report prepared for Fish and Game New Zealand by National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research Ltd. <https://www.fishandgame.org.nz/assets/About-us/National-Research-Programmes/Sports-Fish-Research-Programmes/National-Anglers-Survey-202122.pdf>

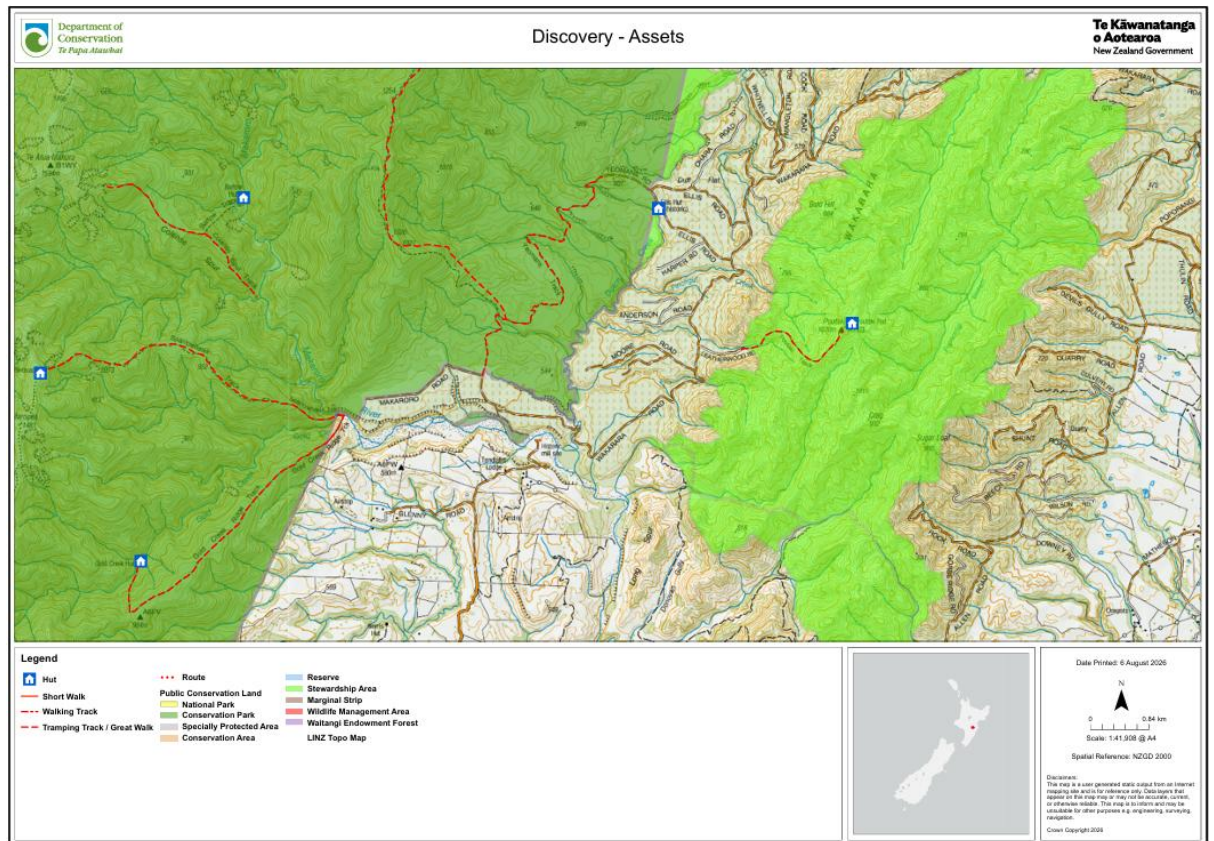
⁵ Fish and Game New Zealand submission

⁶ Stoffels, R. & Unwin, M. (2023). *Angler usage of New Zealand lake and river fisheries: Results from the 2021/22 National Angler Survey.*

⁷ New Zealand Four Wheel Drive Association submission

- a. Tramping Tracks to Gold Creek Hut (4 bunks) and Sparrowhawk Bivvy (2 bunks) and an unmarked route along the Upper Makaroro River to Barlow Hut (8 bunks), accessed by travelling up the river-bed from the road-end by foot or four wheel drive vehicle.
- b. Yeoman's Track – an intermediate grade mountain bike track and tramping track that follows an old log hauling route. The track can form part of a loop with a public access easement over forestry roads within Gwavas Forest (owned by Kaweka Gwavas Forestry Company (KGFC) and managed by Pan Pac.) The Yeomans Track currently has a long term closure due to storm damage, and access through Gwavas Forest is also limited to foot access during weekends only due to logging operations. The Yeoman's Track is regionally significant as the only mountain biking track on PCL within Hawke's Bay.
- c. The Parks Peak Track – a tramping track that branches off the southern end of the Yeoman's Track, providing access to Parks Peak Hut (6 bunks) and other huts in Ruahine Forest Park.
- d. Ellis Hut – a restored historic hut situated at the northern end of the Yeoman's Track. The hut dates from 1884 and is associated with accused murderer Jack Ellis.
- e. The Poutaki Track - a tramping track accessed via forestry roads within KGFC land north of the Makaroro River, that provides access into Gwavas Conservation Area and Poutaki Hut (4 bunks).

Figure 2: Tracks accessed from Wakarara Road-end



27. There are several other nearby recreation opportunities located outside of PCL. The historic Yeoman's Mill site is situated at the Wakarara Road-end, directly across the river from the western most block of the DOC-Give land. This area is used for picnicking and other day use. Some walking and mountain biking also takes place on forestry roads within Gwavas Forest.

Future changes to access

28. The proposed land exchange does not directly affect access to any of the recreation opportunities described above. There would be changes to access as a result of the proposed inundation of the Makaroro River bed and other land, for the creation of the reservoir. However, the effects of inundation, other than on the DOC-Get land under Scenario Two, are outside the scope of this assessment.
29. Resource consents issued for the previous Ruataniwha Water Storage Scheme include conditions to mitigate effects on recreation, including the construction of alternative access. However, these conditions relate to the construction of the

dam, rather than the land exchange, and none of the proposed mitigations would take place on either the DOC-Give or DOC-Get land.

Recreation value of the DOC-Give land

30. The DOC-Give land consists of three separate blocks of land, which are located on the true left of the Makaroro River. These include land adjacent to a tributary of the river, known as Dutch Creek; an island at the confluence of the two waterways; and a further section along the Makaroro River, west of the historic Yeoman's Mill site. The block of PCL along Dutch Creek is contiguous with Ruahine Forest Park, while the other two sections are separated from the Park by river-bed or private land.
31. None of the three blocks contain tracks or other recreational facilities, although a section of the public access easement across KGFC land runs along the edge of the western most parcel. This easement is used for access between the Wakarara Road-end and river-bed and both the Yeoman's Track and the continuation of the public access easement east and west.
32. All three blocks are located close to routes used to access Ruahine Forest Park and Gwavas Forest, access for four wheel drives along the Makaroro River-bed, areas likely to be used for fishing, and also to the the historic mill site. The three areas of DOC-Give land can be assumed to receive some incidental use as a result of this, but there is no indication that they are a focus for recreational use in their own right.
33. Some fishing is likely to take place within Dutch Creek, and this is noted in the Applicant's recreation assessment as an area that "*in the first weeks of the fishing season provides good fishing.*"⁸ Overall use of the Makaroro River catchment is low, however, based on the National Angler Survey data discussed previously.

⁸ Recreation assessment p 23

Recreation value of the DOC-Get land

34. The DOC-Get land (170 ha) is considerably larger than the DOC-Give (29.7). It has a range of environments including pasture, indigenous forest and scrub, and, with the proposed improvement package, would also include replanted wetland areas. The block also contains four small streams that drain into the Makaroro River. Higher altitude areas in the northern part of the DOC-Get land sit within the Wakarara Range Outstanding Natural Feature, designated within the Central Hawke's Bay District Plan.
35. There is no existing public use of the DOC-Get land, although some recreational activity (e.g. hunting, horse riding etc) is undertaken by employees and cadets of Smedley Station
36. Public access to the DOC-Get land under Scenario One, and prior to filling of the reservoir, would be relatively poor. Access would be possible by walking off-track from the adjacent Gwavas Conservation Area or from neighbouring private land, with the permission of landowners.
37. Under Scenario Two, the DOC-Get land could also be accessed by boat or by walking around the reservoir edge at low flow and, in some places, potentially on new areas of Crown Marginal Strip. I note that there are no clear proposals for managed tracks or access into the DOC-Get land described in exchange or consent conditions, so any future access of this nature has been discounted.
38. Although access to the DOC-Get land would be poor, particularly under Scenario One, access within the block would initially be relatively easy as there are existing farm tracks and large areas of open pasture. Accessibility within the block is likely to decrease over time as the farm tracks are unlikely to be maintained by the Department and pest control and the exclusion of stock will likely promote regrowth of vegetation.
39. Aside from the farm tracks, there would be no other facilities on the DOC-Get land to support recreational use.
40. It is likely that the DOC-Get land would be primarily used by hunters. Deer are currently present within the Smedley Exchange Block and hunting occurs on the adjacent Gwavas Conservation Area and privately owned Gwavas Forest.

41. Fishing could also occur in future where the DOC-Get land borders the proposed reservoir, and this is relevant to Scenario Two. The submission from Fish and Game New Zealand indicates that the fishing experience from the DOC-Get land may be inferior to what is currently offered in the Dutch Creek catchment within the DOC-Give. They note in their submission that the reservoir will not result in good habitat for trout and also question the effectiveness of the proposed trap and transfer approach. While neither concern is directly related to the land exchange, the fish population in the reservoir would impact the quality of fishing available from and within the DOC-Get land, and the extent to which this is a draw card for anglers.
42. It is unclear what, if any, recreational fishing opportunity there is within the four streams on the DOC-Get land. However, the streams are much smaller than Dutch Creek and offer less diversity of habitat.
43. Other recreation activities on the DOC-Get land may be reliant on provision of facilities and experiences by third parties.

Future development of the DOC-Give and DOC-Get land

44. It is appropriate to consider the likelihood of future development by the Department of both the DOC-Give and DOC-Get land, when assessing their recreational value. This is discussed below with reference to the statutory planning framework and current DOC strategy and funding priorities.
45. Two statutory plans guide the management of recreation within the DOC-Give land, the Ruahine Forest Park Conservation Management Plan 1992 (CMP)⁹ and the Wellington Conservation Management Strategy 2019¹⁰ (Wellington CMS).
46. The CMP gives the Makaroro River area an “Amenity” zoning. These areas are described as “*small areas, mainly on the periphery of the Park and at roadends,*

⁹ Department of Conservation (1992). Ruahine Forest Park Conservation Management Plan. <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/about-doc/policies-and-plans/conservation-management/ruahine-forest-park-cmp.pdf>

¹⁰ Department of Conservation (2019). Wellington Conservation Management Strategy. <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/our-policies-and-plans/statutory-plans/statutory-plan-publications/conservation-management-strategies/wellington/>

where facilities for picnicking, camping etc may be provided.” The CMP also allows for the use of four wheel drives and mountain bikes in the Makaroro River-bed as long as conservation values are not compromised.

47. The DOC-Give land sits within the Central Spine Place within the Wellington CMS. While the CMS does not provide specific direction in relation to recreation within the DOC-Give land, the general direction for the Central Spine Place includes promoting recreational opportunities and their integrated management through joint projects and shared initiatives with others, and improvement of public access.
48. If the land exchange were to proceed, the Hawke’s Bay Conservation Management Strategy 1994¹¹ (Hawke’s Bay CMS) would provide direction for management of the DOC-Get land. This is because the Makaroro River and Dutch Creek form the boundary between the two CMS regions. The land would sit within the Mountainlands Place within the Hawke’s Bay CMS. The priorities for management at the time that plan was drafted included maintaining and enhancing public access to PCL, and, where further recreational facilities are provided, giving more emphasis to the provision of day use opportunities on the fringes of the mountainlands.
49. It is unlikely that DOC would develop facilities or access on either the DOC-Give or DOC-Get land under current settings. The Department’s current priority is to renew existing assets with a focus on the most popular places and showcase experiences within the conservation estate.

Health and safety of visitors

50. The recreation value of the DOC-Get land could be reduced if DOC incurred significant costs or obligations to manage the safety of visitors. However, the Applicant has not identified any potential hazards to visitors and the future use of

¹¹ Department of Conservation (1994). Hawke’s Bay Conservation Management Strategy.
<https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/our-policies-and-plans/statutory-plans/statutory-plan-publications/conservation-management-strategies/hawkes-bay/>

the DOC-Get land makes it unlikely that significant resource would need to be spent on this.

51. Under DOC's Visitor Safety Policy¹², the Department will only undertake management of visitor safety within managed visitor sites. These are defined as locations on public conservation lands and waters where:
 - a. Non-commercial visitor infrastructure is provided by DOC or an authorised third party, or:
 - b. Non-commercial visitor infrastructure is provided by DOC or an authorised third party to access it, and/or it is part of the visitor experience being offered. Even if the location that is accessed has no visitor infrastructure or is not on public conservation lands and waters.
52. The DOC-Get land would likely not be considered a managed visitor site. Any visitors venturing off-track to access it, or accessing by boat, would therefore be expected to take full responsibility for their own safety. DOC's Visitor Safety Policy would apply, however, where formal access points are provided to the DOC-Get land.
53. The location of any future access points is currently undetermined, but they could potentially be located where the land borders the future location of Crown Marginal Strip, where future walking and cycling tracks either cross the DOC-Get land or facilitate access, and where any access is agreed on the true left of the reservoir including from the KGFC land. At a minimum, this would require the installation of appropriate signage and an entrance stile and it would be appropriate for the cost of this to be borne by the Applicant.
54. Visitors to the DOC-Get land may have an expectation that the previous farm tracks are managed, however, maintaining tracks in this area is unlikely to be a priority for the Department under current settings. Communicating that the tracks on the land are no longer maintained would be a key aspect of any safety messaging for the DOC-Get land.

¹² Department of Conservation, Visitor Safety Management Policy. Approved 11 May 2025.

55. Beyond this, the proposed land exchange would not be expected to impose significant visitor safety obligations and costs on DOC.

Areas of disagreement with the Applicant's assessment of recreation values

56. The Applicant's recreation assessment does not directly address the recreational value of either the DOC-Get or the DOC-Give land. Their assessment was prepared for the Board of Inquiry application lodged under the Resource Management Act in 2013, and describes the wider setting for the proposed dam based on consultation and information available at that time. The Applicant's assessment of recreational values against the criteria supplied by DOC is instead provided in the 2026 Exchange of land overview report.
57. I agree with the Applicant's assessment that the exchange would enhance the conservation values of public conservation land with respect to recreation, but only for Scenario Two, where the impacts of the proposed inundation are considered.
58. I do not see an enhancement of the conservation values of public conservation land under Scenario One, which reflects the values of the land at the present time.
59. My assessment of individual criteria also differs. I note these points in particular:
- a. The Applicant's assessment of the alignment of both the DOC-Give and DOC-Get land with strategic objectives and the visitor network strategy provides no assessment against relevant DOC strategies. It also discusses a new access route around the western end of the reservoir, that is not relevant to the DOC-Get land and therefore the land exchange.
 - b. The assessment of rarity of experience within the region discusses a number of proposed facilities outside of the DOC-Give and DOC-Get land that are out of scope of the land exchange application.
 - c. The Applicant discusses a theoretical overland access between the DOC-Get land and Ruahine Forest Park via Crown Marginal Strip on the true left of the proposed reservoir, adjacent to the KGFC land. This is cited in their assessment against criteria related to social license for the exchange,

anticipated use levels and level of access. The location of marginal strips around the reservoir will result from a change in water edge from the filling of the reservoir, and it would therefore only be relevant to Scenario Two. However, under this scenario, an arm of the proposed reservoir would sever any direct link to Ruahine Forest Park or the current public access easement and access may also be required across KGFC land. This theoretical access is therefore not considered in my assessment.

Matters raised in submissions

60. A number of issues relating to recreational values were raised in comments from invited submitters. These include concerns about loss of access for recreation, the adequacy of the mitigation package from the existing resource consents, funding for proposed mitigation and uncertainty about whether proposed infrastructure would be built and maintained.
61. As noted in the Applicant's response to invited comments, dated 3 June 2026, these comments relate to broader concerns with the project and proposed inundation, rather than the land exchange itself. They are out of scope of this assessment and therefore are not addressed here.
62. Some submitters questioned the future recreation benefits of the DOC-Get land. Federated Mountain Clubs noted that there was no information as to how DOC would develop the additional 170 hectares of conservation land gained through the proposal. They felt that there was little reason to believe that it would be utilised for new recreation opportunities, given proposed legislative reforms, and DOC's current funding and priorities.
63. Fish and Game New Zealand suggested that the Applicant had not presented ideas for new recreation tracks and access to the DOC-Get land, and that DOC would be left to do this itself. They requested that funding be provided to DOC by the Applicant for this purpose.
64. The DOC-Get land is unlikely to be a priority for investment by DOC under current settings and the Department would not be seeking to add additional facilities to its network in this location. DOC would not therefore seek funding for new DOC

owned or managed facilities. However, the Department would welcome discussions with third parties on proposals for funding and management of additional facilities, should the land exchange proceed.

65. As noted at point 41, above, Fish and Game New Zealand also questioned the habitat for trout offered by the reservior and the efficacy of the trap and transfer approach. This is relevant under Scenerio Two in so far as it relates to the quality of fishing available from the DOC-Get land adjacent to the reservoir.

Overall assessment

66. My overall assessment of the recreation value of DOC-Give and DOC-Get Land against the criteria in DOC's "*Internal guidance for conservation values assessments for land exchanges under the Fast-track Approvals Act*" is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Overall assessment of recreation value

Overall recreation ranking for DOC-Give site	Low	
	Scenario One	Scenario Two
Overall recreation ranking for DOC-Get sites	Low	Low / Medium

67. The values of the DOC-Give and DOC-Get areas are assessed in further detail in Table 2, below.

Table 2: Comparative reporting of criteria assessment

Criteria	DOC-Give	DOC-Get
Alignment with strategic objectives/visitor network strategy	Low - DOC's Wellington Conservation Management Strategy (2019) and Ruahine Forest Park Conservation Management Plan (1992) provide little specific direction for management of recreation on the DOC-Give land, and they do not identify it as a priority. There are no managed facilities within the DOC-Give land and, aside from some fishing in Dutch Creek, use of the land is likely to be incidental to other activities in the area. Future development of facilities within the DOC-Give land is unlikely under current settings, with the priority being investment in the most popular places and showcase experiences within the conservation estate and renewal of existing assets, rather than development of new ones.	<i>Scenario One & Two</i> Low – it is unlikely that the Department would seek to offer or develop additional visitor experiences in this area. As with the DOC-Give land, the Department's current priorities for investment in recreation are on investment in the most popular places and showcase experiences within the conservation estate and renewal of existing assets, rather than development of new ones.
Social license – for PCL, social license for exchanging away the land, and for the land offered, social license for acquiring the land	Low – submissions indicate that there is little support for the exchange, although it is noted that many submitters raised concerns with the wider project, rather than the land exchange itself.	<i>Scenario One & Two</i> Low / Medium – the exchange would bring a significantly larger area of land into the conservation estate (170 ha compared to 29.7 ha) that is connected to the adjacent Gwavas Conservation Area. Despite the issues with access, the area offers greater potential for recreation use, including a new hunting opportunity and opportunities to access part of the land by boat (Scenario Two). There may

		also be opportunities for development of the area by third parties.
Rarity of experience within the region	Low - there are many opportunities to access similar experiences in the wider region.	<i>Scenario One</i> Low – there are many opportunities to access similar experiences on the fringes of public conservation land in the region. <i>Scenario Two</i> Medium – the presence of the reservoir would set the DOC-Get land apart from other comparable areas on the fringes of Ruahine Forest Park as there are very few lakes in Hawke’s Bay. However, only a small proportion of the land would border the proposed reservoir. Away from the reservoir, the experience would be more comparable to other areas on the fringes of public conservation land in the region.
Use level (for PCL)/anticipated use level (for land offered)	Low – there are no facilities provided in the DOC-Give land. Aside from a low level of fishing in Dutch Creek, use of the DOC-Give land is likely to be incidental to other activities in the area, which are themselves relatively low use.	<i>Scenario One</i> Low – there is no existing public access to the DOC-Get land. Difficult access and the availability of other opportunities in the area mean that use is likely to be low. The area is likely to be primarily used for hunting as an extension of the existing hunting opportunity in the Gwavas Conservation Area, but use of that area is currently very low.

		<i>Scenario Two</i> <i>Low / Medium – Access on foot will remain relatively difficult under this scenario. However, in addition to the low level of visitation expected under Scenario One, there is likely to be some use from visitors taking boats out on the reservoir and accessing the shore of the DOC-Get land.</i>
Level of access (e.g. tracks)	Low / Medium – there are no tracks within the DOC-Give land, but the area is close to the Wakarara Road-end and can be accessed by crossing the Makaroro River when levels allow. Access is also possible from the north via a public access easement across Gwavas Forest land, subject to forestry operations.	<i>Scenario One</i> Low – access would be possible by walking off-track from the adjacent Gwavas Conservation Area or from neighbouring private land, with the permission of landowners. <i>Scenario Two</i> Low / Medium – In addition to the access described for Scenario One, above, the DOC-Get land could be accessed by boat across the proposed reservoir or by a combination of walking around the reservoir edge at low flow and potentially using new areas of Crown Marginal Strip, where this is practical.
Natural hazard/climate risk	Low / Medium – the DOC-Give land is adjacent to the Makaroro River and Dutch Creek and could be impacted by higher river levels / more intense storm events in a changing climate.	<i>Scenario One & Two</i> Low – no known natural hazard or climate risk relevant to recreation values.

How do any heritage or biodiversity values affect the visitor experience (for land offered, how might heritage or biodiversity values affect the visitor experience?)	Low – use of the DOC-Give land is incidental to other experiences in the area, and heritage and biodiversity values do not provide a compelling reason to visit.	<i>Scenario One & Two</i> Low / Medium – large areas of the DOC-Get land are highly modified pasture, however the higher areas in the north of the block sit within the Wakarara Range Outstanding Natural Feature, designated within the Central Hawke’s Bay District Plan. This area is steeper and less accessible but would provide a scenic backdrop for recreation in the area and compliment the landscape already protected within the Gwavas Conservation Area.
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