



NORTH EAST PARK MASTER PLAN

Forestry Tasmania
and
Dorset Council



Inspiring Place Pty. Ltd.

Environmental Planning, Tourism, Recreation
and Landscape Architecture



**NORTH EAST PARK
MASTER PLAN**

Forestry Tasmania and Dorset Council

Inspiring Place Pty. Ltd.
Environmental, Tourism and Recreational Planners
PO Box 550, Rosny Park, Tasmania 7018
Ph 0362447641 Email : hepper@trump.net.au
Ph 0362311818 Email : jdeg@ozemail.com.au

August 2002



Date	Version
August 2002	Final Master Plan
June 2002	Draft for Public Comment

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 The Current Project.....	2
 Section 2 The Past : The Community Builds Northeast Park in the 1930's	 4
 Section 3 The Present : Northeast Park Today.....	 7
2.1 Existing Values, facilities and Features.....	7
2.2 Planning Context.....	12
2.2.1 Sport and Recreation	12
2.2.2 Tourism	14
2.3 Key Issues.....	14
2.4 Community Ideas for the Park.....	16
2.5 Overall Assessment	17
 Section 4 The Future : A vision for Northeast Park in 2010.....	 18
4.1 A vision for the park.....	18
4.2 Achieving the vision.....	18
4.2.1 Master Plan	18
4.2.1 Park Zones	19
4.2.3 Opportunities for Trails.....	25
4.3 Costs and Staging.....	27

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Dorset Municipality is located in northeastern Tasmania and has a population of over 7000 people. Scottsdale is the largest town and the major service centre for the region. Located on the eastern side of Scottsdale, just 800m from the town centre, is Northeast Park (the Park).

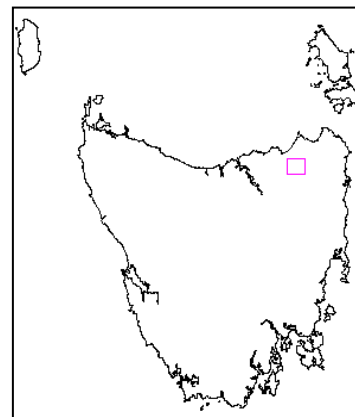
The Park is bordered by the Tasman Highway to the northeast. Along part of the eastern to southeastern side is a pine plantation. To the west, the Park is bordered by land improved for agriculture.

Tuckers Creek runs through the Park and in the early 1920's a natural pool was developed as the town's first swimming pool. Community interest in creating a local park and better swimming facilities eventually led to the acquisition of the land for a park by the then Municipality of Scottsdale. In those early days, community volunteers cleared land, excavated the ponds and constructed a considerable infrastructure of pavilions, shelters and swimming facilities. For many years, Northeast Park was a focus for community recreational activities and a favoured stopping point for visitors to the town.

Over time, the Park and its facilities gradually declined with the development of other town sporting and recreation facilities, limited site maintenance and changes within the local community. These changes included:

- construction of the Scottsdale swimming pool in the late 1950s, which saw the focus of town swimming activities shift away from the Park;

- reductions in personal free time in response to more structured lifestyles leading to the demise of many community sponsored events and volunteer activities;



Map 1.1 Location of Scottsdale in north eastern Tasmania

the ageing of the population and a low disposable income within the municipality again affecting community sponsored events and volunteer activities; and

reductions in available funding for park maintenance as a result of Council amalgamations and a general rationalisation of external maintenance activities.

These latter changes are consistent with trends throughout Australia, which have affected parks everywhere. Only in very recent times, has there been a strong push to reinvigorate substantive urban parks such as Northeast Park so as to protect and enhance their inherent natural and cultural values.

There have been several past attempts to restore the Park by the Lions Club, Council and through the use of various employment schemes but largely these have been on an *ad hoc* basis and not in response to a master plan for the whole of the Park. During the Bicentennial in 1988, funds were made available for the construction of the endemic flora and bushland walk, but since then, these facilities have lacked sufficient maintenance to be successful.

1.2 THE CURRENT PROJECT

The current project, to prepare a Master Plan for Northeast Park, has emerged as a result of the development of the Forest Eco-Centre by Forestry Tasmania on the Tasman Highway to the west of Scottsdale. Northeast Park was initially considered a potential site for the development of the Centre, but eventually a range of considerations led to its development at its current site. Nonetheless, Forestry Tasmania felt a commitment to making improvements to Northeast Park as part of its investment in regional tourism, and in particular to see if a stronger relationship could be developed between the two sites through the development of a walking trail. To this end they have set aside \$100,000 of funds to be spent on improvements to Northeast Park.

The offer of Forestry Tasmania sponsorship encouraged the formation of an Interpretive Consultative Committee (ICC) made up of local community organizations to provide input into the redevelopment of the Park. The ICC prepared a preliminary Strategic Plan that outlined a variety of actions for making improvements to the Park, many of which have been incorporated into the current Master Plan.

The preparation of the Master Plan has involved:

- initial site visit and briefing with Forestry Tasmania about the project;

- consultation with Council staff including those responsible for maintaining the Park;

- consultation with representatives of community groups interested in the Park (essentially the ICC) including Timber Communities of Australia, the Lions Club, Dorset Councillors and staff, Forestry Tasmania, the Australian Plants Society, the local Catchment Group, the tourism industry, the Rotary Club and the Scottsdale Primary School (Adopt-a-park);

- consultation with a number of local residents on a community walk and talk held within the Park;

- review of material about the Park provided by community members e.g. historic photographs and newspaper clippings;

- preparation of a preliminary Master Plan;

- exhibition of the Master Plan in the local community; and

- a revision of the Master Plan based on comments received from the exhibition.

The Master Plan report that follows essentially provides three snapshots of Northeast Park, those being:

- a brief outline of the original development concept of the Park in the 1930's (Section 2);

- a brief outline of the Park today including its values, facilities and key management issues (Section 3); and

- a description of what Northeast Park could be in the future through the implementation of the Master Plan (Section 4).

SECTION 2

THE PAST : THE COMMUNITY BUILDS NORTHEAST PARK IN THE 1930'S

A brief outline of the historic development Northeast Park has been obtained from a review of material provided by the local community during the preparation of the Master Plan. This included:

photographs taken during construction and the early years of community use;

copies of newspaper articles about the Park during the 1930's; and

discussion with local residents about the history and use of the Park.

Northeast Park was originally known as Tuckers Creek, named after the farmer who owned land nearby. Tuckers Creek contained a natural pool that was fed by natural springs and became used as the local swimming pool.

In 1932, the Scottsdale Swimming Club discussed the proposal to acquire land in the vicinity of the existing swimming pool at Tuckers Creek and to convert it into a picnic ground and park. It was envisaged that the work would require the creation of dams to expand the swimming area and to plant native trees and shrubs. Strong community support followed and this led to the organising of many working bees at the site.

The driving force for the development of the Park was Mr.C.S. Northeast who was President of the Progress Association at the time, and after whom the Park was to be named. He was supported by other family members and the wider community, who willingly volunteered their time, labor and equipment to the task of clearing vegetation and constructing facilities for public use. The Scottsdale Council acquired the land from Mr Tucker and handed over 14 acres to the Progress Association for the development of the park

A newspaper article (undated, but around 1935) indicated:

"The work has been accomplished in four months, the first working bee when 170 men and youth commenced to clear the area along the creek of its logs, ferns and blackberries. Every section of the community assisted,

and each week-end dozens of men were seen transforming the waste area into a thing of beauty. The bed of the pool was cleaned, and a dam, faced with concrete was built. Substantial dressing sheds were erected for men and women, and diving platforms, springboards, and a water chute were installed. A rustic teahouse and summer-house, together with three rustic bridges, all constructed of she-oak, contribute materially to the picturesqueness of the park.

Under the high-diving board there is 10 ft. of water, and under the bridge, 50 yards further up the creek, the depth is seven feet. The pool is about 50 yards across, and children can learn to swim in perfect safety. A raft constructed from empty bitumen tins provides the children with much fun and is also a safety precaution. "

About 1000 people were present at the official opening of Northeast Park by the Chief Secretary Mr T. D'Alton in February 1935. A carnival of swimming events was organised for the day.

Further enhancements were made to the Park, as described by the Mercury Newspaper in 1944 as:

"Today there are about 20 pools crossed by rustic bridges. Water lillies have been planted in the pools. Golden daffodils give colour to the scene in the spring and grow as wild as their bushland setting. Wattles have been planted. Rustic shelters of bull-oak and bark melt into their surroundings. Lovely walks have been cut from the thick dense scrub and undergrowth. Swan, wild duck, teal, gulls and bantams were the start of what was the promise of a bird sanctuary, but natural and human elements have taken their toll. From a wilderness a still parkland has emerged – a place for a quiet hour, for meditation, for games, for romance. No attempt has been made to convert the park into a flower garden. The bush for the most part is virgin. Much more has yet to be done, but that must be a post-war effort. "

Other newspaper clippings refer to the construction of a 'commodious' grandstand, kiosk, tables and seats, see-saws, swings, swings and other amusements being

developed in the Park. Consultation with residents indicated that band rotundas and a water slide were also added to the Park.

There were two newspaper articles that provide an interesting insight into the community value of the Park. The first referred to a notice hanging on the wall of one of the dressing-sheds, which stated:

“No charge is made for swimming in this pool, but swimmers are expected to pull up 20 ferns each time they have a swim.”

The second was a statement that:

“Northeast Park belongs to the people of Scottsdale, and all are urged to make every endeavor to stop any vandalism, and any picking of flowers or shrubs, so that this delightful corner of our own natural bush may be kept intact for those who are yet to come.”

In these early days, the creation of Northeast Park was a significant achievement by the community to create an attractive asset for the benefit of all its residents and visitors. The Park provided recreational, aesthetic, social and community value to the local community and generated great pride.

SECTION 3

THE PRESENT : NORTHEAST PARK TODAY

2.1 EXISTING VALUES, FACILITIES AND FEATURES

Extensive areas of natural vegetation have been progressively removed in the Scottsdale area as land has been developed for agricultural and forestry activities. Northeast Park and parts of Tucker Creek (to the south of the Park) are two areas that retain remnant vegetation.

Table 2.1 provides a brief summary of the physical and biological values of the general Scottsdale area and where information does exist, the values known within the Park.

The main features of the Park are:

- the developed camping area visible from the Tasman Highway upon arrival (refer to photograph 1);

- the series of water ponds within the parkland setting of open grassy areas and remnant bushland (refer to photograph 2);

- a cluster of large and small picnic, barbeque and play facilities (refer to photograph 3);

- a few large open grassed areas (refer to photograph 4); and

- retention of the bushland vegetation within the Park (refer to photograph 5).

The current facilities within the Park are:

- a small camping area with basic amenities (e.g. showers, toilets, water, bins, lights) that caters for caravan, camper vans and tent based camping;

- a small car parking area;

- numerous picnic shelters, including two larger shelters for group barbeque and picnic use;

- numerous picnic tables and rubbish bins;

a playground area with modern equipment and other isolated swings/play equipment; and

walking trails including the flora walk developed during the 1988 Bicentennial.

Value	Description	Comment	Source
climate	• 'humid-warm' • high effective precipitation (rainfall greater than evaporation) • ~980 mm per annum average rainfall • highest rainfall in April - September • mean maximum temperature 16.5 per annum • mean minimum temperature 6.8 per annum	• relatively warm temperatures and relatively high rainfall beneficial for cropping and plant growth • effective precipitation supports numerous permanent watercourses and water storages • climate conducive to outdoor recreation	Bureau of Meteorology
geology	• tertiary basalt	• deeply weathered	Department of Mines 1:500,000 Geological Map of Tasmania
soils	• dark yellow brown clay soils • relatively deep (>2m) • low permeability	• low streambank erosion potential	Land Systems of Tasmania: Region 4
hydrology	• numerous seeps and springs feed headwaters of Tuckers Creek	• Tuckers Creek is a major tributary of the Great Forester River • the Creek has been altered to develop a number of ponds	DPIWE Great Forester Catchment : Water Resources Information Package
flora	• <i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i> wet forest including white gum, stringybark, swamp gum blackwood, silver wattle and paperbark	• originally cleared for agriculture, large areas of the site have regenerated to native vegetation	1:500,000 Vegetation Map of Tasmania Land Systems of Tasmania: Region 4
fauna	• The Great Forester River has 79 different families of macroinvertebrates (48 edgewater, 31 riffle habitat), 5 frog species, 18 freshwater fish species and 5 species of freshwater crayfish. Six aquatic species have been listed as endangered (1 rare and 5 vulnerable) • the Park has sufficient bushland to sustain a small range of native fauna e.g. platypus • the burrowing crayfish (<i>Engaeus spinicaudatus</i>) is known from the Park and is listed under the <i>Threatened Species Protection Act 1995</i> as vulnerable	• diverse range of native and exotic species adapted to modified park environments and bushland settings • not known what aquatic species have been identified at the Park but it is expected that a diverse range may be found • Tuckers Creek has been subject to large scale disturbance from agricultural and forestry activity, dams, weed invasion and potential predation by feral cats and dogs	DPIWE Great Forester Catchment : Water Resources Information Package

Table 2.1 Summary of Physical and Biological Values



Photograph 1 : View of camping ground upon entry to the Park



Photograph 2 : View of largest pond about 50m from the camping ground



Photograph 3 : View of picnic shelter near the camping ground



Photograph 4 : View of open grassed areas in the centre of the Park



Photograph 5: View of bushland towards the southern end of the Park

The Park attracts a wide range of uses including:

passive recreation activities such as walking, picnicking, trout fishing, barbeques, card playing, walking dogs and general children's play;

community events such as weddings, group picnic/barbeque get-togethers, Carols by candlelight, Australia Day functions;

use by schools and Waterwatch as an outdoor recreation and environmental education resource; and

regular use of the caravan/camping area by visitors and those stopping for a short visit to enjoy the pleasant park setting and facilities.

2.2 PLANNING CONTEXT

2.2.1 Sport and Recreation

The basic intent of the Master Plan to upgrade Northeast Park is consistent with the Dorset Council Strategic Plan 1999-2004 mission statement:

"to improve the quality of life of the people of the municipality through services based on the principles of quality, equity, value and responsiveness"

and it's property management objectives:

"to provide a range of facilities and services which meet the reasonable needs of the community"

and related strategies such as:

"manage and conserve the natural recreation areas of the municipality";

"ensure that Council-owned facilities are developed and maintained to allow safe access and use"; and

"encourage community management of facilities and assist in the maintenance and development of those facilities".

The Dorset Sport and Recreation Study¹ was prepared for the Council during 2001. Some of the key findings of relevance to the future planning, development and management of Northeast Park were:

the current trends within Australia towards a relative balance between those participating in sport through a club or association (28.9%) and in unorganised activities (25.8%) and high rates of participation in walking nationally by over 18 year olds (18.8%) and in Tasmania (31.6%);

the community had generally indicated in public open spaces :

- that existing paths and trails are not adequately maintained,
- there was need for more designated areas to walk dogs,
- the need for off-road paths and trails that linked directly to town centres, and
- the need for more trails for walking, bicycles, horse riding etc;

the need to provide a reasonable level of access for people with a movement disability;

concern about the perceived low level of maintenance of open space areas and facilities; and

the opportunity to consider a trail link between the Park and town centre.

The *Sport and Recreation Study* also undertook a hazard assessment of Northeast Park and gave a ranking of 3/5 for fire safety, general safety and structural adequacy. It ranked disabled access as 4/5. It considered the Park to be in an average condition.

The Study held a focus workshop in Scottsdale and Northeast Park was not identified as a location that works well, doesn't work well, could be improved or should be removed. A random telephone survey of Dorset residents identified the following comments on the Park:

"Northeast Park needs some maintenance and gardening".

"A lot of parks are not really accessible. Northeast Park is one where there is a fair trek to get there."

¹ Pitt and Sherry 2001. "Dorset Sport and Recreation Study: Planning Report: unpublished report to the Dorset Council, Tasmania.

“The caravan park needs a new shower block, and the park toilets need maintenance.”

“The Northeast Park has a walking track, but other than that, no where else has a surface ok to walk on.”

“Northeast Park needs maintenance and the gardens cleaned up.”

2.2.2 Tourism

The *Tasmanian Visitor Survey 1996/97 to 2000/01* was produced by Tourism Tasmania in 2002². Of the total visitors to the State in 2000/01, 79,000 visited Scottsdale and of these, 29,100 stopped in or looked around the town and 4,700 stayed a night (a total visitation to the town of 33,800). For the same period, visitors stayed an average of 9 nights in the State and approximately 37.6% undertook a bushwalk for 2 or less hours duration. Potentially, then, 12,710 visitors to the town (37.6% of the total visitors who stopped or looked around) may have participated in a bushwalk of this duration while in the State. This figure has relevance to the potential development of a walking track between the Forestry Tasmania Eco Centre and Northeast Park (see Section 4.2.3).

2.3 KEY ISSUES

A number of key issues were identified through site visits and consultation with the local community. The key issues were:

- poor entry and signage of the Park;
- limited walkway connections;
- need to manage the different sub-areas of the Park;
- poor siting and condition of existing facilities;
- lack of interpretation and appropriate information;
- security, safety and risk management concerns;
- need for environmental management; and
- need to reinvigorate community involvement in the Park.

² See http://www.tourismtasmania.com.au/pdf/tvs2000_2001.pdf.

Table 2.2 provides a brief overview of these issues.

Key Issue	Overview
Poor entry and signage of the Park	Entry to the Park is confusing with two access roads servicing the camping ground and the Park. The existing signs are poor and do not convey the features, facilities or activities available within the Park.
Limited walkway connections	The Park is not linked to the town centre or to other key open spaces and facilities by any safe, convenient or suitable footpath network. There is no designation of the existing tracks and paths within the Park for different or shared activities. The quality of the walking tracks has fallen with limited maintenance, lack of signs/interpretation, over-hanging vegetation and site impacts caused by vehicles/trail bikes.
Need to manage the different sub-areas of the Park	The Park provides a range of settings and functions, which need to be managed and maintained with different actions. There needs to be a clear and consistent distinction between the caravan park area, community picnic/events area and natural bushland area to enhance the user experience of the Park. This is not being conveyed through the maintenance program, park furniture design, signs, plantings, weed control etc.
Poor siting and condition of existing facilities	Over time, the <i>ad hoc</i> placement of some facilities (e.g. caravan park amenities, barbeque and picnic tables, some play equipment, car parking, signs) has diminished the presentation of the Park. Relocating and removal of some facilities will avoid the clutter and create more useful spaces within the Park to enhance visitor experiences and activities. Some facilities are in poor condition (e.g. toilets, car parking areas, picnic shelters, paths, interpretation) and need upgrading or removal.
Lack of interpretation and appropriate information	Despite the significance of the natural and cultural values of the Park to the community, these values are being ignored or lost in the presentation of the Park to users. The past community use and facilities help to explain the key features of the Park – the series of water ponds, development of open spaces and remains of past structures. In the absence of this understanding the Park is simply viewed and experienced as another local park.
Security, safety and risk management concerns	The local community indicated concern with safety in the Park, mainly as a result of vandalism and limited control over vehicles, trail bikes and dogs. There are several risk management issues with steep banks near the water ponds, lack of control over vehicle access, walking tracks under trees etc.
Need for environmental management	The Park has been degraded by weed invasion and past vegetation clearing to create open areas that remain largely unused and overgrown. The impacts of waste water and run-off pollution needs to be monitored. Fire management needs to be considered for the conservation of the vegetation.
Need to reinvigorate community involvement in the Park	The community involvement that originally developed the Park has waned over the years and the Park shows signs of neglect and poor care. The resources available to the Council are limited and involvement of the local community will help improve the skills, knowledge and resources for improving the Park. These actions need to be co-ordinated and to work towards a long term vision for the Park. There is no Master Plan or Management Plan prepared for the Park at present. The current plan will provide the direction needed.

Table 2.2 : Overview of Park Issues

2.4 COMMUNITY IDEAS FOR THE PARK

Consultation with the local community identified a number of ideas for improving and enhancing the Park. Residents were consulted at the commencement of the project and their views incorporated in the draft master plan. Further comments were received during a period of public display of the draft master plan. The ideas at these times included:

- creating a trail link between the Park and the town centre as walking is a popular activity in the local community;

- upgrading the water features by further site works to reveal the series of water pools developed in the past;

- rehabilitation of the 'bushland nature area'

- increasing the resources for ongoing maintenance of the Park;

- establishing a Friends of Northeast Park to co-ordinate community involvement in protecting and managing the Park;

- considering the opportunity for community gardens where volunteers can contribute time to enhancing the Park setting;

- using the Park as a demonstration site for streamcare and education e.g. Waterwatch activities;

- reinstating the native vegetation and looking at opportunities for enhancement of these values e.g. bush tucker experience, animal spotting tours;

- interpreting the cultural history of the site and community e.g. the pioneering agricultural and forestry communities;

- moving towards a low maintenance requirement for the Park;

- creating a disabled accessible path network within the Park;

- upgrading the toilets, showers and amenities (including a laundry) within the caravan park area;

- providing a toddler's play area;

- improvements to the barbeque area including an upgrade of the power supply to the area;

- installation of additional bins, dog faeces bins and bags and a public phone;

tackling the weed invasion and water quality problems (albeit in a sensitive way which protects valuable fauna habitat);

inclusion of a dedicated dog exercise area within the Park which is fenced and safe; and

the conduct of more community events.

A detailed submission was also received from the Skate Space Committee regarding development of a skate park within Northeast Park. Skate board facilities and a bmx track were also mentioned in a submission from the Grade 7 students of the Scottsdale High School.

2.5 OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The Park remains as an important open space for the local community. However over time the presentation of the Park's facilities and management of its landscape setting has declined, to the extent that the special natural and cultural values are not fully recognised now as part of the park experience. Whilst limited resources, low levels of community involvement, *ad hoc* development and inappropriate management practices have somewhat diminished the open space, the potential exists to restore a greater appreciation of these natural and cultural values through the adoption of an agreed vision and plan for the Park.

A common view expressed by most local people was the need to restore the 'naturalness' of the Park rather than introduce exotic plantings or flower beds. It was also clear that many people did not want major new facilities to be developed within the Park but rather better management and maintenance of what exists, so that it could better serve the recreational needs of both locals and visitors. Many wanted the Park to interpret the significance it has as a natural and cultural place within Scottsdale. Many also people considered the Park had the opportunity to attract some increased visitor stops if the existing facilities and presentation of the Park were improved.

In the absence of a Master Plan and a strong commitment towards upgrading the Park by the community and Council, there is the risk that the natural and cultural values of the Park will slowly degrade over time.

SECTION 4

THE FUTURE : A VISION FOR NORTHEAST PARK IN 2010

4.1 A VISION FOR THE PARK

Northeast Park has a strong history as a focus for community recreational activity. The vision of the Master Plan is to unite the historic features and role of the Park with its contemporary aspects to create a place that plays a greater part in the life of the Scottsdale community once again.

The over-arching goal for Northeast Park should be:

“To plan, develop and manage Northeast Park on a sustainable basis as Scottsdale’s premier park for residents and visitors to enjoy.”

The specific management objectives to work towards this goal for Northeast Park would be to:

manage the natural, cultural and community values on a sustainable basis;

maintain the visual amenity of the Park and its contribution to the overall image of Scottsdale as a place;

enhance the quality of visitor experiences within the Park;

provide facilities, which cater for a range of community and recreational activities;

ensure a high standard of design, safety and maintenance of facilities within the Park; and

promote community awareness and involvement in managing the diverse values of the Park.

4.2 ACHIEVING THE VISION

4.2.1 Master Plan

A copy of the Master Plan to achieve the above vision is provided below.

4.2.1 Park Zones

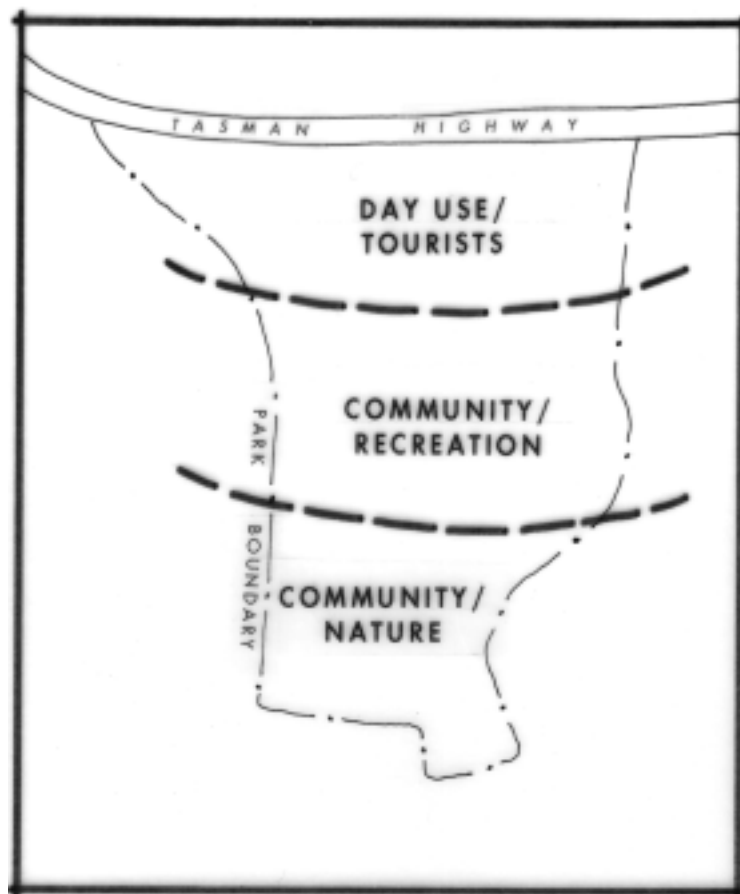
To achieve the aim of providing facilities and features that fulfill the vision, the Park has been considered as three zones. By seeing the park as zones, distinct roles can be attributed to each area and facilities provided or upgraded (where necessary) to encourage greater use and enjoyment of the area. The three zones used in developing the Master Plan are;

Day use/Tourists Zone;

Community/Recreation Zone; and

Community/Nature Zone.

Map 4.1 shows the general zones within the Park.



Map 4.1 Zone Plan for Northeast Park



MASTER PLAN NORTHEAST PARK

• DORSET COUNCIL • FORESTRY TASMANIA •

INSPIRING PLACE PTY. LTD.

0 25 50m

AUGUST 2002

Day Use/Tourists Zone

The Day use/Tourists Zone covers the area closest to the Tasman Highway and includes the access road, car parking, travelers rest picnic area and the existing caravan park.

The key features of the Master Plan for this Zone are to:

- create one entry into the camping ground and Park and rehabilitate the other entry road;

- upgrade the entry signs to promote the facilities and activities (using internationally adopted symbols) available at the Park;

- re-organise the caravan park to establish a better managed setting on the northern side of entry road (8-12 caravan sites), which then allows restoration of the park landscape closer to the ponds to improve the overall presentation of the Park;

- create a sense of arrival with information about the Park on orientation signs located near the main pedestrian entry points off the car parking areas;

- construct new paths to the proposed interpretation deck at the northern end of the pond which offers picturesque views and the opportunity to interpret the social history and cultural significance of the Park;

- remove inappropriate tree plantings and introduce new tree plantings to reinforce the naturalness of the Park;

- development of a bus and car parking area for visitors in close proximity to the other features of the zone but away from the immediate edge of the ponds;

- development of a new amenities block (including a laundry) at the turning circle to service primarily Park visitors but also to cater for caravan park use;

- upgrade electricity supply to this zone to accommodate additional loads within the amenities block, the caravan park and at the barbeques (Community/Recreation Zone below); and

place gates on the other existing entry roads to prevent illegal vehicle access into the Park³.

The Master Plan notionally shows three options for a caravan park. The alternative sites to the existing caravan park are options if at some time in the future, it was feasible to re-consider alternative sites. For instance if there was an operator willing to take over responsibility from the Council, then these other locations should be considered to avoid over-development of the Park.

This zone was examined for its usefulness for skate facilities. Whilst the area is certainly large enough for the development of a skate park, the use was not seen to be appropriate to the setting, nor was the site seen to be an appropriate location within the Town setting. Experience in the design of skate parks elsewhere in the State suggests that they are better located more central to the population i.e. closer to the centre of the town. Easy access is essential as is access to shops, transport, etc.

Community/Recreation Zone

The Community / Recreation Zone is the central area of the Park with a focus on providing better children's play facilities, spaces for community events and picnics, an interface with the park's bushland/aquatic environments and specific areas designated for off-leash dog exercise.

The main purpose of this Zone is to accommodate community recreation use and activities and to minimise potential conflicts with other activities within the Park. Some of the open spaces have the capacity to cater for community events in the future.

The key features of the Master Plan for this Zone are to:

- upgrade a degraded picnic/barbeque area and develop a toddlers play area near the entry into the Park (close to car park, future toilets and good passive surveillance);

- remove the isolated play structures and picnic tables to create a more open parkland space where these facilities are consolidated into specific picnic and play areas to reduce maintenance costs and risk management concerns;

³ Master keys could be provided to emergency services and landowners that may at times require use of these roads.

upgrade the main picnic shelter to allow the capacity for larger groups and shared use by smaller groups by extending the shelter, constructing a central barbeque facility, hardening the ground surface, re-roofing part of the structure with clear material and providing additional tables/seating;

upgrading paths to allow for disabled access to the community recreation facilities and to link to the Community/Nature Zone;

clearing the ponds and creeklines of invasive weeds;

removing tree stumps located within the area to improve the visual amenity of the parkland;

make the smaller picnic shelters more open and attractive by removal of the sidewalls;

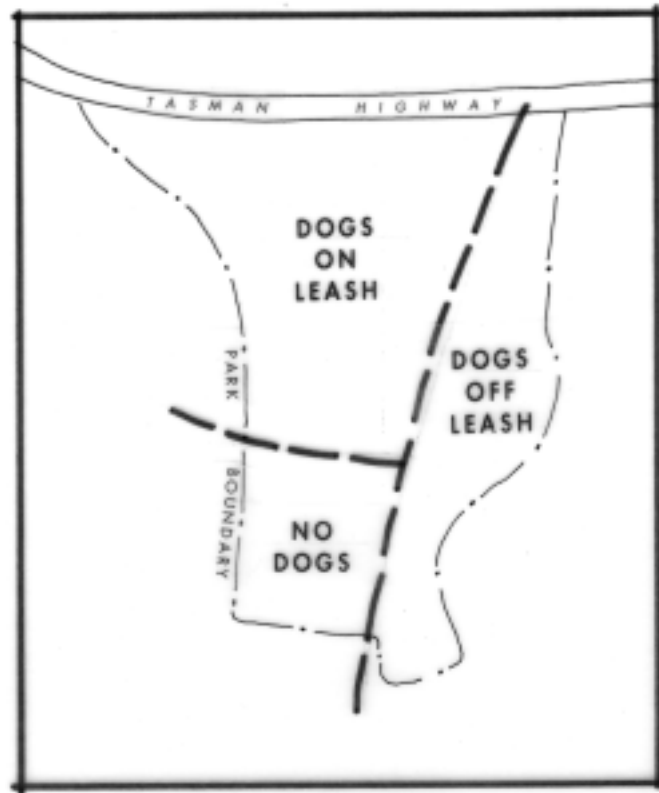
provide an interpretation panel about the former swimming pool use of the ponds;

provide a new pathway to the eastern side of the Park and allow revegetation to take place on some previously cleared areas (thus reducing the maintenance costs in the long term);

improve the drainage of the existing playground, directing water into the creekline to the northeast of the play area;

designate a dog exercising area (off leash) on the large grassed area on the eastern side of the Park (this area could be fenced to further enhance the safety of the area) and encourage dog exercising to also occur within the pine plantation (subject to approval by the landowner) (see Map 4.2); and

provide a vehicle parking area for dog users and allow dog walking to occur on the roads within the Park that link through to the above dog exercising areas.



Map 4.2 Notional Zoning of Northeast Park for Dog Exercise

Community/Nature Zone

The Community/Nature Zone is primarily the southern part of the Park where remnant vegetation is found and there has been little development of recreational facilities other than tracks.

The key features of the Master Plan for this Zone are to:

- protect and restore, where possible, the natural values of the bushland and creek environs;

- encourage visitor understanding and appreciation of the natural values through limited interpretation and information provided at the start of the existing walks;

- remove weeds from the bushland areas; and

- consider the long term option for a trail link to the Forest Eco-Centre on the western side of Scottsdale.

No facilities would be provided within this zone except walking trails and signage/interpretation at the entry to the zone regarding:

- the natural values to be found there;

- appropriate behavior; and

- the prohibition on dogs in the bushland portion of the zone (see Map 4.2 above) (protects wildlife, reduces noise disturbances to enhance bird-watching, reduces impacts from dog faeces, etc.).

4.2.3 Opportunities for Trails

Various options were considered for potential trail links to Northeast Park, including:

- a connection along Tuckers Creek to eventually provide a walk connection to the Forest Eco-Centre on the western side of Scottsdale;

- a trail connection to the town centre across private land on the northwestern side of the Park, utilising a proposed new street within the recently approved subdivision;

upgrading the footpath along the Tasman Highway to the town centre; and

a northern link along Tuckers Creek towards the school farm and Scottsdale Road.

All the options have some potential recreational value as part of a longer term vision for the Park.

The first option, a link to the Forest Eco-Centre, was initially proposed at the time that the site for the Centre was chosen. The assumption at the time was that such a link would provide a reason for visitors to stay in the town longer and to enjoy the values of Northeast Park. Further investigation has since revealed that construction of such a path would require access agreements with a number of private landowners, which could affect the agricultural operation of their properties. Further, the trail would involve the construction of over a kilometer of track through rolling terrain, a large portion of which is cleared agricultural lands. A trail of this length and slope would involve a 1-2 hour time commitment on the part of visitors and would be inaccessible to a considerable portion of the visitor population.

Whilst the number of potential visitor users may seem high (e.g. ~12,000 based on visitor numbers, numbers of visitors undertaking bushwalks, etc. see Section 2.2.2), it is unlikely that the proposed track would be attractive to a level that warrants the cost of its construction or the on-going burden of its maintenance. By way of comparison, a new trail such as the one proposed would be competing with the well-promoted 60 Great Short Walks. These walks occur in attractive settings and have been selected to be accessible to the widest numbers of visitors. Maintenance of the most of the Great Short Walks is undertaken within existing management frameworks and budgets.

Consultation during the course of the current project revealed that while people saw that the proposed link may have some limited tourism benefit, that it actually had limited usefulness to the community and that more immediate priorities were to improve access from the town centre for the bulk of the populace to the Park.

For these reasons, and the likelihood that most visitors would continue to use their vehicles to access both attractions, it was difficult to justify the trail in the short to medium term. An alternative proposal suggested that rather than physically linking the Eco-Centre and Northeast Park, an interpretive link with the themes of the Park should be developed e.g. social values of the pioneering timber community, natural vegetation communities, use of timber, etc. Interpretive links are to be encouraged.

The second option, a trail linking the town centre to the Park, was considered to be a good opportunity in the short –medium term with the short distance involved and

ability to link into a proposed new street. It would provide a good option for encouraging residents (and possibly some visitors) to walk to the Park. Development of this trail is seen to have the highest priority of the four options.

The suitability of the third option will always be affected by a number of factors. The presence of the highway and high levels of heavy vehicle use, the gradient along the road and the need for users to then cross the highway to reach the Park are negative aspects of this option. Consequently any upgrading of the footpath should be seen as being more beneficial for improving walking access to residential properties than the Park.

The fourth option, along Tuckers Creek, would extend the recreational potential of the trails and provide a long trail loop between the Eco-Centre and the school farm, with the Park being a focus point on the trail. Recent Green Corps work in clearing the weeds at Tuckers Creek has shown the potential to provide an attractive walking trail along the creek.

The benefit of the above trails would be in improving the connections of the Park to the town's residents and in providing new opportunities for improving the health and well-being of the community. The elements of the Master Plan reflect the findings of the *Dorset Sport and Recreation Study 2001*, which stated that the community desires access to better recreational trails, designated dog walking areas and quality open space in urban areas.

4.3 COSTS AND STAGING

Table 4.1 shows the indicative costs for implementing the Master Plan.

It is recommended that the Master Plan be implemented in stages, dependent on available funds for the Park. Table 4.2 provides an Action Plan for the first stage of the Master Plan over the next 3 years. The success of the works over the next three years will provide a guide to the capacity and willingness of those involved to undertake future stages of the works beyond the three year program set out in the table.

Forestry Tasmania have indicated their willingness to commit up to \$100,000 of funding to underwrite some of the works of the Master Plan. The Action Plan suggests how this money might best be distributed to the tasks involved, with other matters best dealt with by Council, the community or community organizations.

	Responsibility	Cost estimate
Priority Actions Stage 1 2002 - 2005		
Start a Friends of Northeast Park	Dorset Council	–
Upgrade the entry road and car park, including bollards	Dorset Council	\$85,000
Rehabilitation of the central entry road	Dorset Council	\$10,000
Install gates on side entry roads and at the turning circle	Dorset Council	\$4,500
Design and install new entry signs for the Park	Dorset Council	\$6,000
Build new toilets and shower facilities	Dorset Council	\$40,000
Re-organise the caravan/camping ground as per the Master Plan layout, including upgrading services to the sites	Dorset Council	\$30,000
Restore the parkland setting adjacent to the ponds in the Day Use/Tourists Zone	Dorset Council	\$5,000
Construct new paths to the barbeque shelter (Community Recreation Zone)	Dorset Council	\$4,500
Develop a new interpretation area and deck at the northern end of the pond to promote the natural and cultural values of the Park	Forestry Tasmania	\$55,000
Research the Park's history for use in the interpretation area	Forestry Tasmania	\$5,000
Develop a toddlers play area	Forestry Tasmania/ Dorset Council	\$27,000
Provide interpretation panels/signage in other locations around the Park	Forestry Tasmania	\$12,000
Construct new paths to the interpretation area	Forestry Tasmania	\$8,000
Design and install new orientation signs for the Park near the entry points	Forestry Tasmania	\$6,000
Upgrade the capacity of the group picnic/barbeque shelter (new BBQs, bench seating and paving)	Service Club	\$31,000
Clear ponds and creekline of weeds in the Day Use/Tourists and Community/Recreation Zones	Dorset Council, service clubs/community groups	allow \$10,000
Remove tree stumps	Dorset Council	\$500
Begin weed removal programme in the Nature/Recreation Zone	Dorset Council, service clubs/community groups	Dorset Council/ community
Correct drainage from playground to creek	Dorset Council	\$500
Install signposts for dog exercise areas	Dorset Council	\$2,000
Upgrade electrical system	Dorset Council	allow say \$50,000
Rationalise the location of the scattered play and picnic facilities	Dorset Council	\$200
Sub-total		\$392,200

Table 4.3 : Action Plan (continues next page)

Site preparation and preliminaries, including demolition	say 5%	\$19,600
Design and contract contingency	say 5%	\$19,600
Professional Fees	say 10%	\$39,200
	Total	\$470,600
Stage 2 Actions - post 2005		
New gravel paths in the Community/Nature Zone, link trail between upgraded picnic shelter and Community/Nature Zone and Dog Exercise Area	Dorset Council	\$14,000
Revegetate open/failed areas identified in Master Plan	Dorset Council/Forestry Tasmania	\$30,000
New rubbish and recycling bins	Dorset Council	\$5,000
	Total	\$49,000

Table 4.3 : Action Plan