

boost of national park status the visitor activity will rise rapidly.

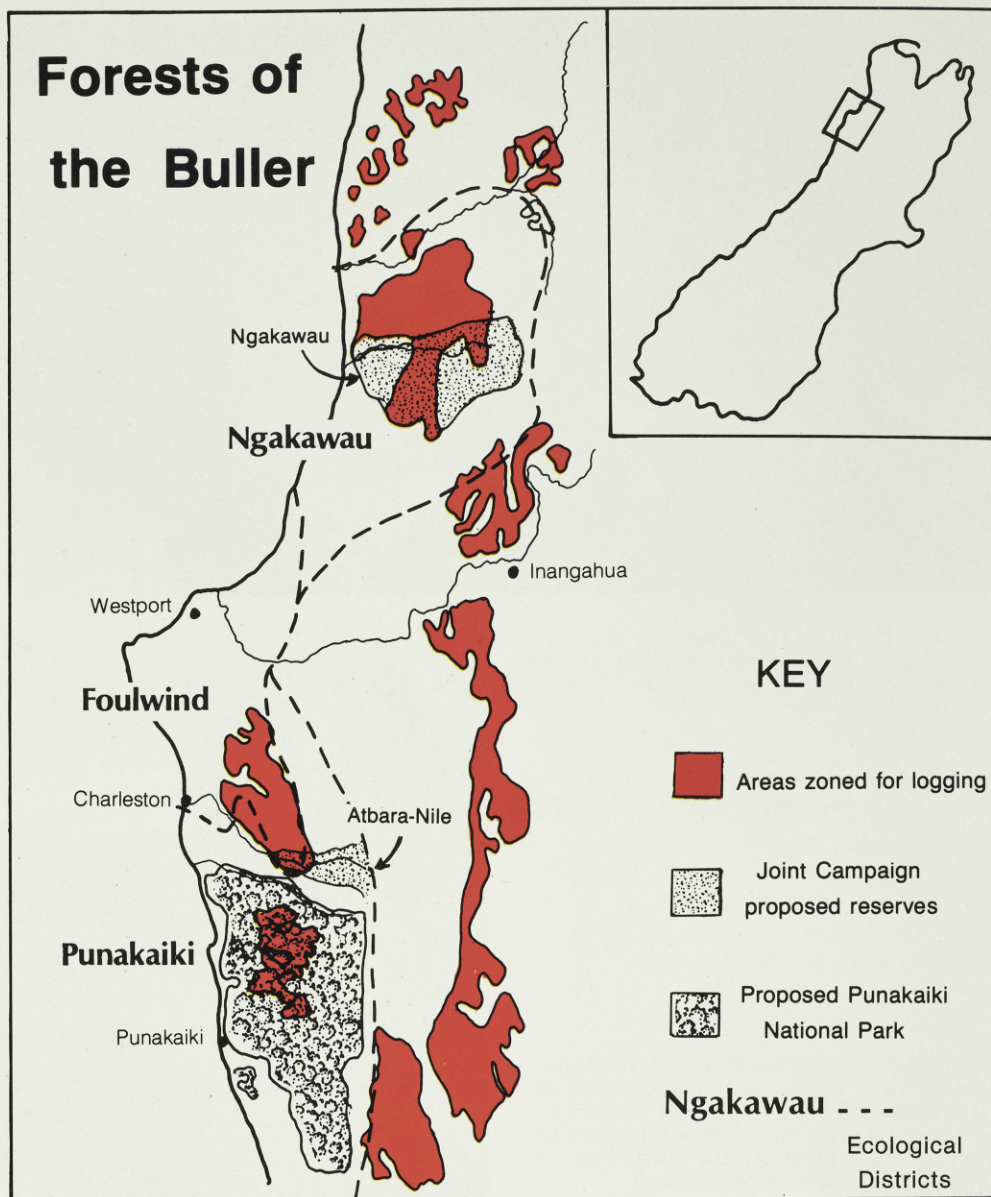
Providing that minor boundary changes avoid the park conflicting with mining areas, the main objection to national park establishment comes from the Forest Service. It currently administers much of the land that would be put into national park and has zoned part of this for logging.

There are some 25 jobs at the Tauranga Bay sawmill which could be at risk with a national park. Unlike some communities, though, which are more dependent on sawmill employment, these jobs represent only about 1 percent of the Westport workforce. At the same time the tourism-related industries in Westport provide some 10 percent of employment and in Punakaiki already 50 percent.

While the contribution of sawmilling to the local economy has been declining for many years, tourism-related industries have been on the increase. The benefits of tourism to the region are already clearly visible in the jobs and businesses it supports.

In this context, national park establishment is far from being the ultimate form of "locking up" resources sometime suggested. Instead a national park can be seen as a way of opening up and developing an area for tourism —thereby creating a highly productive and renewable use for the resources.

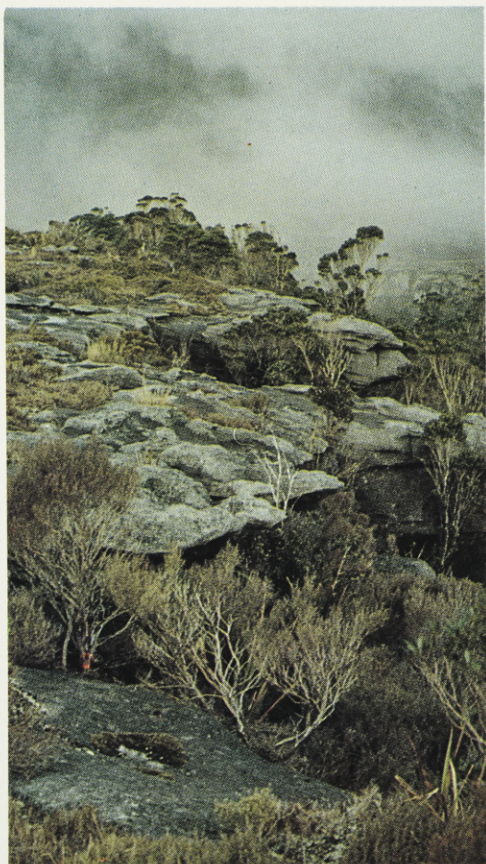
For once, but certainly not for the last time, a local interest in resource development and job creation appears to strengthen the case for conservation. 🐦



BULLER RESERVES:

Custodians of time's secrets

by Peter Grant and Annette Lees, NFAC Researchers



Wind-swept coal measures on the Ngakawau plateau support a strange vegetation, especially adapted to survive in the toxins of coal-rich soil.

Photo: Peter Grant

Like the prow of a ship, a ridge of virgin forest between two waterways extends out from the Paparoa mountains onto a desolate sea of logged forest and exotic plantings — such is the area bounded by the Atbara Creek and Nile River in Buller, one of two regions on the West Coast lately singled out by the Joint Campaign on Native Forests for protection.

The other is the Ngakawau Forest, north of Westport, featuring a dramatic gorge, wind-swept coal plateau and a high perched basin of podocarp/beech forest.

In the wake of a recommendation by the State Forests Scientific Reserves Advisory Committee that existing forest reserves in Buller are inadequate, the Joint Campaign has produced scientific reports highlighting just why these two areas are so special.

The Atbara-Nile

Just to the north of the proposed Punakaiki National Park lie the Atbara Creek and Nile River, their sources high in the rugged Paparoa mountains. The