

History

During pre-European times, it is acknowledged that the Waiuku Forest area was of significance to Maori. At the time of European arrival, the headland now covered by Waiuku Forest, was characterised by extensive wind-blown coastal sand dunes and areas of high manuka and fern.

Waiuku Forest was established by the Public Works Department in 1932 as a protection forest to prevent the spread of sand onto adjacent farmland. Marram grass was planted to stabilise the sand, then tree lupin to provide nutrients and shelter for the pines, which were first planted in 1935. Little tending of these stands occurred until after the NZ Forest Service assumed management of the forest in 1952.

In 1966, the Crown entered into a Mining Licence with New Zealand Steel Limited for the purpose of extraction of iron sands. The Licence, which requires the clearfelling of forest in advance of mining operations, is for a term of 100 years and covers all but 15.9 hectares of the Forest.

In 1987 when the NZ Forest Service ceased to exist, management of the Forest passed to the State Owned Enterprise NZ Forestry Corporation Ltd who, when the decision was made not to sell the cutting rights for the Forest, continued to manage the forest via their successor Crown Forestry Management Ltd.

In July 2001 when Crown Forestry Management Ltd was wound up, responsibility for management of the forest passed to MAF's Crown Forestry Group. Day to day forestry operations, including a grazing license, are managed by Northland Forest Managers Ltd.

There are two areas of Maori-owned land within the forest. These are a fishing reserve (Tangitangina) along the eastern (river) boundary and a Maori urupa in the centre of the forest.

There are also four areas of former Maori Land within the forest totalling some 305 hectares. These areas are presently gazetted as Conservation Land pending the settlement of a Treaty of Waitangi claim.