



The Tree Sitting in New Zealand (1978)

Pureora Forest is one of the top rainforests in the world; it is 760 square kilometers located on the north island of New Zealand. The forest is home to a large diversity of plant and animal life. Animals such as native birds, sika deer, pigs, possums, and goats occupy the island. Along with the island's interesting and varying geography, the tallest mountain in the park is Mount Pureora and its peak is approximately 3 822 feet above sea level. Other mountains include Mount Titiraupenga and Mount Pukeokahu that are 3 419 feet and 2 769 feet above sea level, respectively. There is also a lagoon in the park called the Waihora Lagoon that's connected to the Waihora Stream, as well as various valleys, Mangakahu Valley and Tunawaea Valley. The forest is known for its large amounts of thousand-year-old Podocarp trees, which are a large family of coniferous trees. There are 146 species of evergreen trees in the species. These types of trees are found mainly in the southern hemisphere. In 1978, the Pureora Forest was starting to be used as a resource for logging where they began cutting down the trees. However, a protest began when people who disagreed with the deforestation of these trees in the Pureora forest came together. Activists, Steven King and Shirley Guildford led the protest and were joined by many others. They protested by building platforms and tree houses on the large trees in the forest and occupied the area.

The activists refused to come down from them; therefore, this would prevent the loggers from cutting down the trees. It was a very unique way to protest as it had never been done before, but it turned out to be successful and the logging was stopped. The protesters wanted to make sure the logging was permanently stopped, so this resulted in getting the government to change the rules on logging operations. Thus, Native Forest Restoration Trust was established and made the park into how it is today. Moreover, Shirley Guildford restored a pine tree area with native species, which was named after her, as "Shirley Guildford Grove" in 1988. Overall, the protest did what it was designed to do; the tree sitting was extremely effective in stopping the process of deforestation, and attracting the government's attention on the environmental issues that had resulted from what is being done to natural habitats. Additionally, due to the success of the protest, the park has brought a lot of tourism to it and New Zealand. For instance, the park is used for camping, picnicking, swimming, and mountain biking. Aside from tourism, scientists also use the twelve-meter Forest Tower in the park to view and observe the native birds, including the Kuku, Kakariki, and Kaka. Lastly, tourist spots consist of the treetop protest site, which people can still access today. A steam hauler that was used to move logs for milling throughout the forest and a tractor to harvest trees for posts are still currently present in the park.

Additional information:

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http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=1543

<http://anthropology.msu.edu/anp336-us13/2013/08/10/deforestation-of-pureora-new-zealand/>