

# ***Executive Summary***

The core purpose of the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy is to enable the community to establish a long term integrated strategy to protect, manage and develop the coastal environment. A major element of the ‘use’ of the Wairarapa coastal environment is the value that it holds as the major recreational playground for the Wairarapa community and visitors to the area. Particularly during the summer months, the coastline provides an attractive environment for recreation.

The Access and Recreation Technical Report brings together existing information pertaining to recreation and public access planning in the Wairarapa coastal environment to provide an initial assessment of opportunities and vulnerabilities for recreation and access to the Wairarapa coastal environment.

The Resource Management Act 1991 affords priority to protection and enhancement of access to the coastal marine area, provided this is not to the detriment of the principles of sustainable management.

A coastal users survey has been prepared to gauge recreation values and recreation resources along the coast. The findings of this survey will be collated into the final version of the report. It is likely that the findings of the survey will identify recreation activities that will need to be controlled as well as priority areas for management or recreation enhancement.

The report finds that access to, and use of, the coast for recreational purposes is determined by a range of site-specific characteristics and this varies between individuals and resource users. Conflict between recreationists often results when users access the coastal environment for incompatible recreational activities. Issues such as topography are also a determining factor in the level of recreational use, as are impacts of recreation access on the environment.

In many cases, what is taken as public access to the shore often crosses private land. Such access is vulnerable and cannot be guaranteed for the future.

The potential for enhanced recreation access has been identified at 23 sites. These sites are commonly accessible by vehicles to within close proximity of the coast, but are held in private ownership. It is recommended that consideration be given to the formalisation of access in these areas through district plan provisions, land acquisition or formalised voluntary easements.

In managing potential conflict, the report recommends that priority be given to activities which require access to the coastal marine area (the sea), over other types of recreational activities. It is recommended that access to the coast be restricted where it is likely to compromise physical or ecological features, or cultural sites.

A coordinated approach is recommended for the management of access and recreation, which considers the role of various plans and strategies, including reserve management plans addressing the acquisition, sale and management of Council and Department of Conservation (DOC) assets. A preliminary review of such documents has been provided to assist with this task.

The methods identified in this report must be combined with findings from the other technical reports and the outcomes of public consultation to formulate an integrated strategy for coastal environmental management. This approach should incorporate land use planning, asset and infrastructure planning and investment and recreation planning as proposed by the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy.

## ***Acknowledgements***

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# **Chapter 1**

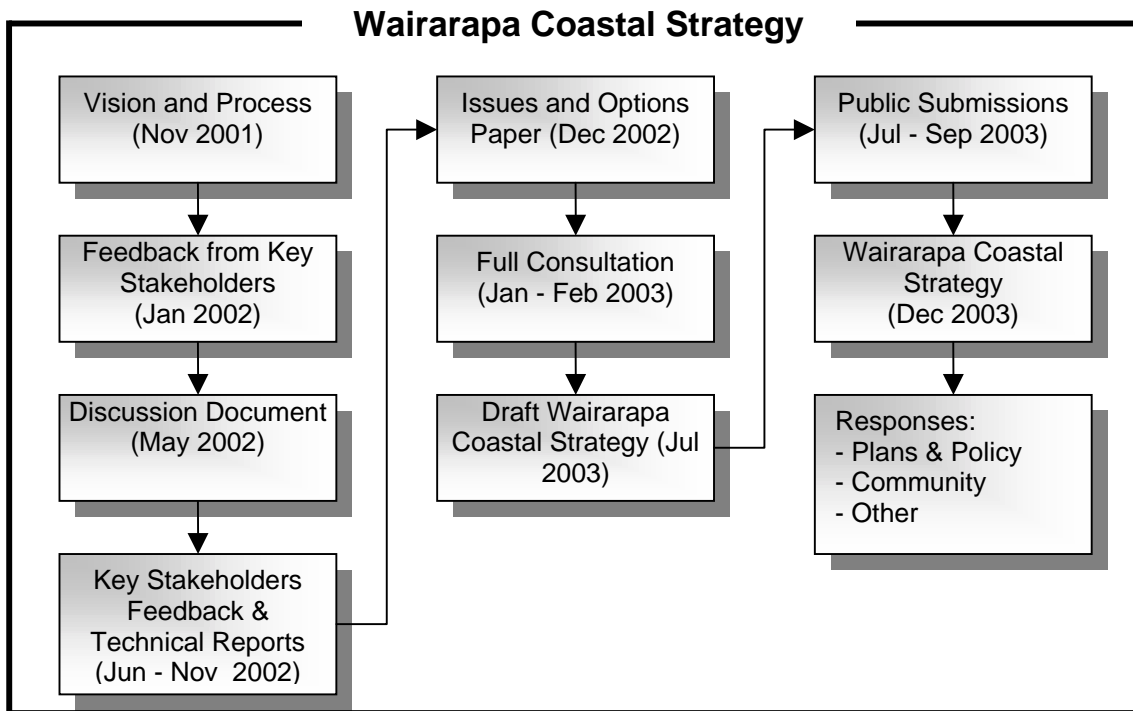
## **Introduction**

The purpose of the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy is to enable the community to establish a long-term integrated strategy to protect, manage and develop the coastal environment. The strategy has a long term planning horizon (looking towards our grandchildren's future), and the recommendations and outcomes of the strategy are intended to go beyond the scope of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) to encompass wider Council and community goals.

It is intended that this technical report will feed into subsequent documents such as the Issues and Options Paper, and the draft and final versions of the Coastal Strategy, as well as assist with various community consultation forums. This report is one of a series aimed at addressing key technical issues for the Strategy. Other technical reports include:

- € Planning Context and Methods;
- € Landscape;
- € Natural Environment and Ecology;
- € Built Environment and Infrastructure;
- € Land Use and Development.
- € Heritage; and
- € Hazards.

The Coastal Strategy process is being undertaken by the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy Group, comprising the Masterton, Carterton, and South Wairarapa District Councils, the Wellington Regional Council, and local Iwi. This group formed after concerns that development was proceeding along the Wairarapa coast in an ad hoc and fragmented way. The development of the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy will span three calendar years, with most of the work occurring in 2002 and 2003 (refer Figure 1.1).



*Figure 1.1: Wairarapa Coastal Strategy Process*

The jurisdictional boundaries of Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils within the Wellington Region are shown on Figure 1.2.

A key issue for sustainable and integrated management is to minimise potential conflict between land uses and values on the coast such as natural character, landscape, natural ecosystems, cultural heritage and recreation. Likewise coastal land uses and values can be affected by factors such as natural hazards (particularly erosion) and infrastructural constraints.

The purpose of this technical report is to collate existing information on the access and recreational values of the Wairarapa. The report outlines the means to identify the significance of these values, and prioritise their significance.

The report also identifies statutory provisions and requirements that are relevant to coastal development and highlights a number of strategic objectives and priority issues established in relation to the coastal environment. Issues for further consideration are also identified.



It is recognised that there is a strong link between the provision of recreational infrastructure and demands placed on other resources (such as residential infrastructure). This paper is one of a series aimed at addressing key technical issues for the Coastal Strategy. The recommendations in this paper must be viewed in the context of the outcomes of the other Technical Reports.

The report identifies present and future pressures, threats or limits to access and recreational values, and makes recommendations on the types of responses available to protect these values.

The focus of this paper is on recreation and access demand as it specifically relates to the coastal environment. It is recognised that there may be further recreation demands, particularly for active recreation facilities such as playing fields, in a number of coastal settlements as a result of changing demographic trends. These demands are not specific to the coastal environment, but rather an issue for the urban development of these settlement areas (as with community and commercial activities). While it is important that these issues are addressed in any future planning for residential growth, they are not specifically addressed as part of this technical report.



## **Chapter 2**

# **Statutory Framework**

This section of the report sets the scene for why public access and recreational opportunities warrant provision and protection, and how this provision is justified in terms of legislation. It also examines how the various district councils have translated these requirements within the local context. Specific reference to key statutory provisions related to the coastal environment is provided in the ‘Planning Context and Methods’ Technical Report, which provides both the legislative mandate and a ‘toolbox’ of methods for the implementation of the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy. This report summarises those components with reference to access and recreation.

The statutory framework includes the following components:

- ∄ Resource Management Act 1991.
- ∄ New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.
- ∄ Regional Council planning documents, including the Regional Policy Statement for Wellington and Regional Plans.
- ∄ District Plans.
- ∄ Other legislation including: Reserves Act 1977, Public Works Act 1981, Local Government Act 1974, Conservation Act 1987, New Zealand Walkways Act 1990, Historic Places Act 1993 and Bylaws.

## 2.1 Resource Management Legislation

### (1) Resource Management Act 1991

Part II of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) contains a number of matters of relevance to the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy. Of relevance to this report, section 6(d) of the Act identifies that the “maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area” (CMA) is a matter of national importance. Councils must recognise and provide for public access to the CMA.

Another important section of the Act is s229 – Purposes of esplanade reserves and esplanade strips. This section states that a reserve or strip has one or more of the following purposes:

- a) *To contribute to the protection of conservation values, by in particular-*
  - (i) *Maintaining or enhancing the natural functioning of the adjacent sea, river, or lake; or*
  - (ii) *Maintaining or enhancing water quality; or*
  - (iii) *Maintaining or enhancing aquatic habitats; or*
  - (iv) *Protecting the natural values associated with the esplanade reserve/strip; or*
- b) *To enable public access to or along any sea, river, or lake; or*
- c) *To enable public recreational use of the esplanade reserve or esplanade strip and adjacent sea, river, or lake, where the use is compatible with conservation values.*

More specific policy direction with respect to the provision of public access and recreation activities is contained within the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS).

## (2) New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS)

This document makes the observation that:

*“People and communities expect that lands of the Crown in the CMA shall generally be available for free public use and enjoyment (General Principle 5)”.*

The NZCPS includes a number of relevant policies, which can be considered as either requirements for, or constraints on, land use planning.

The following NZCPS policies are considered **requirements** for recreation planning in coastal environments:

- € Policy 3.1.2 NZCPS – policy statements and plans should identify those recreational areas which are important to the region or district and which should therefore be given special protection.
- € Policy 3.1.3 NZCPS – policy statements and plans should recognise, and seek to maintain and enhance, the contribution that open space makes to amenity values.
- € Policy 3.5.2 NZCPS –provision should be made to identify the location and extent of areas where public have access to and along the coastal marine area, the identification of those areas where such access is desirable and should be enhanced, and where such access for those with disabilities should be provided.
- € Policy 3.5.3 NZCPS – policy statements and plans should make provision for the creation of esplanade reserves, esplanade strips or access strips to and along the coastal marine area.
- € Policy 3.5.4 NZCPS – policy statements and plans should identify the access which Maori have to sites of cultural value to them.

The NZCPS sets clear direction for district and regional planning. One of the purposes of this technical report is to identify how the Strategy may respond to these policies. It is relevant to note that Wairarapa's district plans do not identify the location and extent of areas where public access to and along the CMA is provided.

The following NZCPS policies indicate **constraints** on management:

- ∄ Policy 1.1.1: The natural character of the coastal environment should be preserved by encouraging appropriate subdivision, use and development in areas already compromised, taking into account potential effects, both within and outside the immediate location and by avoiding cumulative effects.
- ∄ Policy 3.1.1: Use of the coast by the public should not be allowed to have significant adverse effects on the coastal environment, amenity values, the safety of the public or the enjoyment of the coast by the public.
- ∄ Policy 3.5.1: In all cases, other than those identified in the policy, public access to and along the coastal marine area should be provided as a matter of national importance. Access may be restricted where areas contain significant vegetation or significant habitats, or to protect Maori cultural values, public health and safety, security or other exceptional circumstances).

These policies indicate that while public access to the coast is an important principle, this should not be allowed to adversely affect those values explicitly identified. Therefore access can be restricted in certain specific circumstances. In terms of Policy 3.1.1 of the NZCPS, access or recreational use of the coast may even need to be controlled to enable other types of access. The issue of conflicting demands is considered further in Chapter 4 of this report.

### **(3) Regional Planning Documents**

While consideration must be given to a wide range of objectives and policies within the Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region (RPS) and Regional Coastal

Plan (RCP), the following is considered of particular relevance to this Technical Report:

## **(a) Regional Policy Statement for Wellington**

### *Objective 2*

*Existing provisions for public access to and along the coastal marine area remain and appropriate opportunities are taken to enhance public access.*

### *Policy 2*

*To consider, where relevant and to the appropriate extent, the following matters when planning for and making decisions about the subdivision, use or development in the coastal environment:*

*(5) The actual or potential adverse effects of subdivision, use or development on ... recreation, open space or amenity values.*

### *Policy 4*

*To ensure, in planning for or making decisions about new subdivision, use or development, that there is no reduction in the quality of existing legal access to and along the coastal marine area; and that opportunities are taken, other than in exceptional circumstances, to enhance the amount and variety of public access to and along the coastal marine area.*

With regards to the above Policy 4, the RPS elaborates its policy by referring to particular sites that are recognised as having special characteristics, and which it may not be appropriate to improve public access to protect the values of important sites. This is consistent with the policies set out in the NZCPS. These sites are included on Maps 1 to 23.

The methods sections of the RPS identify the need for an inter-agency approach, particularly through the use of district plans and other management plans, although no further guidance is given regarding the contents, or methods that may be adopted within such plans. A coastal strategy provides an opportunity to achieve this method.

## **(b) Regional Coastal Plan**

Objectives covering access are addressed in Part 4 of the Regional Coastal Plan.

### *Objective 4.1.8*

*Public access along and within the coastal marine area is maintained and enhanced.*

The Plan states that public access to the coast is naturally limited in many parts of Wairarapa by the nature of the coastline. The Plan discusses a number of situations where public access is not appropriate. Examples include where it is necessary to protect:

- § Any area of significant or important conservation value;
- § Sites of significance to tangata whenua;
- § Public health or for safety;
- § Animal health; and,
- § Security, defence purposes or quarantine facilities.

There are three related policies that deal with the above issues.

Policy 4.2.15 addresses the need to avoid adverse effects of development on existing lawful access where practicable, and where this is not practical, to ensure that adverse effects are mitigated or remedied so that there is no net reduction of the quality of public access in the area. The plan makes specific reference to the use of financial contributions as an implementation method, particularly when the provision of alternative access is required. Policy 4.2.16 refers to the need to support any initiatives which might arise to improve public access along and within the coastal marine area, and to take appropriate opportunities arising from new use and development to improve public access. Policy 4.2.17 recognises that there may be circumstances when public access along the coastal marine area is not appropriate.

The importance of the coastal environment to recreation activities is recognised in Policy 4.2.20, which requires recognition *where practicable*. The plan, however, explains instances where it may not be possible to *recognise* the importance of the coastal environment to recreation activities, such as where technical, ecological and financial constraints prohibit.

Other policies cover consideration of coastal permit applications, in order to maintain or enhance, and not unnecessarily compromise existing recreational opportunities, and



the need to ensure that the use of recreational vessels and vehicles does not create a public nuisance or compromise health and safety.

## **(4) Masterton District Plan**

Management Goal 19 of the Masterton District Plan outlines the need to *maximise access to public resources, as appropriate, balanced with the protection of private rights*. Corresponding Objective 9 notes *the provision of public access to natural and physical resources of significant value to the community in a manner appropriate to the value and circumstance*. The related policies include the need to *prioritise the needs for public access to areas of significant value* and to *facilitate public access to areas of significant value by a systematic formation of appropriate access ways*.

Management Goal 23 is similar to this in that it seeks to *sustain the high level of environmental quality to the district by protecting those amenity values and aspects of the environment which are presently of excellent standard, and to enhance those aspects which are not to an acceptable level*. A significant district issue is the *maintenance and enhancement of the district amenity values (those natural and physical qualities and characteristics that contribute to people's appreciation of an area's pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes)*.

Rules in the Coastal Management Area have an environmental outcome of seeking *a system of reserves and public access along the coast which does not threaten its natural character or conservation values*. This is achieved by requiring esplanade strips as a condition of subdivision where the land abuts mean high water springs.

## **(5) Carterton District Plan**

Issue 7.1 of the Carterton District Plan addresses the preservation of natural character of water margins and provision for public access to and along margins. Significant natural margins include the coastline. Carterton District Plan notes that it is important that *any improved access does not compromise natural character*. This is supported by the objective of preserving the natural character of significant water margins and maintaining and enhancing public access to and along significant water margins.

The *Coastal Management Area* is identified in Appendix 13A of the Plan (Schedule of important natural features and areas) as being the area of land 60metres inland of Mean High Water Springs (MHWS).

Access to water is addressed in the following policies:

*“(7.3.1) Prioritise and protect those water margins which are significant in terms of recreational, public access, landscape and ecological values.*

*(7.3.3) Promote access to and protection of water margins through the provision of esplanade reserves, esplanade strips, access strips and voluntary mechanisms.*

*(7.3.3) In establishing esplanade land acknowledge the rights of private land owners.*

*(13.3.6) Ensure that subdivision and development along the coast will not be subject to erosion...while maintaining and enhancing public access and protecting important natural areas and features.”*

In explaining the above policies, the plan notes that priority will be given to establishing esplanade land along significant water margins within the District. In these areas land use and subdivision consents will be assessed against criteria relating to public access and management of significant coastal features/attributes.

The only relevant supporting rule is that an esplanade strip or reserve will generally be required along MHWS. The assessment criteria for this is quite general and is the same for rivers as for coasts.

## **(6) South Wairarapa District Plan**

The South Wairarapa District Plan notes as a significant issue the management of the coastal area and the margins of lakes and rivers. This is addressed by; Objective 5.5.1(4) *Better public access to and along the coast where appropriate*; whilst Objective 5.11.1(1) aims to *recognise the need for public access to and the protection of the conservation values of the coast...and the utilisation of them where possible for recreation purposes.*

Supporting policies are as follows:

*“5.2.2(2) To establish...a complete public easement along the landward margin of the CMA with appropriate access points*

*5.5.2(3) To encourage voluntary agreements for protection of private land and provision of public access.*

*5.5.2(9) To recognise that public access to and along the coast may be restricted for reasons of public safety, security and defence purposes.*

*5.11.2(1) To ensure that in subdivision of land abutting any...inlet of the sea or the coastline, appropriate provision is made for the creation of esplanade reserves/strips.*

*5.11.2(2) To work with landowners and interested parties to achieve the voluntary creation of esplanade reserves etc.”*

Rule 6.4 of the Plan requires that esplanade strips or reserves generally be required when land is subdivided adjacent to MHWS. The subdivision of land adjacent to MHWS is a discretionary activity under the South Wairarapa District Plan. There is no specific requirement that public access be provided for when land use consents are required.

## **2.2 Other Legislation**

A number of other statutes have an impact upon the planning and management of coastal reserves and open space areas. These include the Reserves Act 1977, Conservation Act 1974, Local Government Act 1974, Public Works Act 1981, Walkways Act 1990 and Historic Places Act 1993. These are considered below.

### **(1) Reserves Act 1977**

The Reserves Act has three main functions (as outlined in the Act):

*“To provide for the preservation and management, for the benefit and enjoyment of the public, areas of New Zealand with some special feature or value.*

*To ensure, as far as practicable, the preservation of representative natural ecosystems or landscapes and the indigenous species of flora and fauna, both rare and commonplace, they contain.*

*To ensure, as far as practicable, the preservation of access for the public to the coastline, islands, lake shores and river banks, and to encourage the protection and preservation of the natural character of these areas.”*

The Reserves Act makes provision for the acquisition, control, management, maintenance, preservation, development and use of public reserves, and makes provision for public access to the coastline and rural areas. Administering bodies are required to prepare management plans for their reserves, which are open for public review (with the exception of most government and local purpose reserves).

The eight classifications of reserves differ in their level of protection and public access rights. The public access provisions of each of the reserve classifications are outlined below:

<b>Reserve Type</b>	<b>Public Access Rights</b>
Recreational	The public has freedom of entry and access to the reserve subject to any bylaws and to any controls that the administering body imposes <sup>1</sup> (for the protection and general well-being of the reserve and for the protection and control of the public using it).
Historic	As for recreational reserves.
Scenic	As for recreational reserves.
Nature	Access prohibited except by permit.
Scientific	Access can be prohibited from time to time.
Government Purpose	Access can be prohibited from time to time.
Local Government	Access can be prohibited from time to time.

Three types of protection for private land are available under the Reserves Act:

- ∉ Protected private land agreements;
- ∉ Conservation covenants; and
- ∉ Management agreements.

These mechanisms essentially give private land the same status as reserves in public ownership. Therefore the same access provisions apply unless otherwise negotiated with the landowner. A common public access restriction on farm land occurs around lambing time.

Management of reserve space is governed in reserves strategies and plans. These plans and strategies are prepared in accordance with the Reserves Act 1977 and are

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<sup>1</sup> Sections 53 and 54 of the Reserves Act 1977 outline powers of the administering body.

consistent with Recreation Strategies and Annual Plans, which broadly outline funding parameters.

## **(a) South Wairarapa District Reserves Strategy**

Relevant strategies and plans for South Wairarapa District are considered below. Reserves strategies and plans are a legislative requirement under the Reserves Act 1977. Of the three Councils, only South Wairarapa has completed this exercise and prepared the plans. Masterton District Council has however prepared the “*Riversdale Recreation Reserve Management Plan and Development Concept Report*”, specifically addressing management of this reserve. MDC also intend to notify their urban management plans before the end of the year. Carterton District Council has yet to embark on public consultation for management plans under the Reserves Act.

The SWDC Reserves Strategy (October 2001) outlines a number of Principles and Actions in the management of council reserves. These include:

*Principle 2.1.*

*Giving priority to improving access to the coastline and natural areas adjacent to urban settlements will assist in meeting the increasing demands for access to a wide range of informal recreational opportunities.*

*Principle 2.2.*

*Fostering extensive access to a wide range of recreational opportunity, in conjunction with other agencies and private landowners will result in reduced impact from recreational users and a lower servicing cost on existing reserves.*

### Actions

- € *“Establish a strategy for the management of recreation reserves and the use of the coastline.*
- € *Acquire and improve recreational access opportunities as part of the new subdivision consent process.*
- € *Promote access to natural areas through contributing to land management resource planning including promoting access to rivers through such programmes as flood plain management planning carried out by the WRC.*
- € *Work with DoC and WRC to improve access opportunities to the coastline*

- € *Negotiate and facilitate formal public access on private lands giving priority to coastal areas.*
- € *Consider advancing the coastal trail concept as initially promulgated by the WRC giving priority to developing a walkway from Cape Palliser lighthouse to White Rock.”*

*Principle 3.4.1*

*Developing a reserves acquisition and disposal policy will guide the council and the community in acquiring reserve lands, ensuring only important reserve lands are added to the reserves network and that only lands of conservation and recreation value remain as part of the reserves network.*

*Principle 4.1.*

*Liaison with stakeholders will ensure matters of local interest are addressed in context of the national and regional interests, and reserves are strategically aligned with reserves and public land managed by other agencies both in and adjacent to the District.*

*Principle 4.2.*

*Maintaining ongoing liaison with private landowners will ensure public access is better managed on private land.*

**Actions:**

- € *“Review, at an appropriate time, the Council’s and DoC’s coastal reserve lands with a view to rationalising ownership and management to more effectively match the role and responsibilities of the two agencies.*
- € *Maintain ongoing dialogue with neighbouring councils as part of the strategic planning process.*
- € *Formalise public access to natural areas affecting private lands.*
- € *Advocate for public access to natural and rural areas generally as part of the input into land management affairs affecting DoC and WRC lands.”*

## **(b) South Wairarapa Rural Reserves Management Plan**

Additional guidance on the use of South Wairarapa District Council reserves is provided in their Rural Reserves Management Plan, which provides policies on:

- € Car parking areas being well defined;
- € Access points being clearly signposted;
- € Vehicle access being controlled to minimise impacts on natural and cultural features;

- € Access points to water being controlled to minimise conflicting use and prevent damage to natural and cultural sites;
- € Access agreements with landowners being entered into where access affects private landowners;
- € Boat access points will be maintained for recreational users, and commercial users will be required to pay launching fees;
- € Boat launching operations will be controlled by bylaws;
- € Trail bikes and other motorised off-road vehicles is prohibited within reserves except on formed roads, vehicle access points routes, designated areas;
- € Use of mountain bikes and horses within reserves is restricted to formed and unformed roads, tracks and open grass areas; and
- € Camping areas will be controlled through bylaws.

### **(c) *Other Reserves Management Plans***

Aside from the above management plans, a management plan has been prepared for the Southern Recreation Reserve at Riversdale Beach, which outlines the ongoing management and future development of this reserve. The Riversdale Beach Ratepayers Association has prepared a Riversdale Beach Esplanade Reserve report. This report has no legal status, but was compiled to assist in managing Riversdale Beach to ensure access to the coastal area was maintained by the provision of clearly marked tracks.

Masterton District Council has also facilitated the establishment of the Riversdale Beach Dune Management Committee, which operates very successfully to protect and enhance the beach environment. Masterton District Council also issues warrants to local residents under the Reserves Act, Litter Act and Bylaws to maintain the amenity of the coast.

## **(2) Conservation Act 1974**

This Act is administered by the Department of Conservation and has a number of provisions that relate to recreational use and access to conservation lands managed by the Department.

The Act provides for marginal strips, which are similar to the esplanade reserve provisions in the RMA, but strips are owned by the Crown. The purposes of marginal strips are, amongst others:

- € To enable public access to any adjacent watercourses or bodies of water; and,
- € For public recreational use of the marginal strips and adjacent watercourses or bodies of water.

Section 17 of the Act deals with access to conservation areas. Entry and use of conservation areas is generally free of charge, although charges may be imposed for the use of facilities (other than paths and tracks) that are provided. Any trade or business conducted on land administered by the Department, or a business that services visitors, must be authorised by way of a concession. Concessionaires may, to the extent of their concession, impose charges for:

- € Access to or use of any structure, site or place;
- € The use of facilities, including camping sites or parking places; and
- € People to partake in particular activities undertaken in a conservation area.

The Minister of Conservation has the power to close conservation areas to the public from time to time (s13). The Act also contains provisions for dog control, which enable the Minister to declare conservation lands as controlled dog or open dog areas.

### ***(a) Conservation Management Strategy***

Each Conservancy is required to prepare a Conservation Management Strategy for its area of jurisdiction. In the interests of integrated management, it is important that the priorities outlined in the Conservation Management Strategy for Wellington (1996-



2005) are given due consideration. The Conservation Strategy identifies a number of priority areas along and near the coast for integrated management with other agencies. These include the Castlepoint Scenic Reserve, Putangirua Pinnacles Scenic Reserve and Cape Palliser.

Key Conservation Issues for the Department of Conservation for integrated management identified by the strategy include:

*Management of use of coastal reserves vested in local authorities under the Reserves Act  
Integrated management of areas with conservation values by the Department, iwi, local government, communities and landowners to protect conservation values within Wairarapa and facilitate recreation.*

With regards to the issue of access and recreation, the following objectives are of relevance:

- 1. Maintain public access to areas managed by the Department, free of charge.*
- 2. Improve public access to areas managed by the Department.*
- 3. Improve public walking opportunities within the Conservancy.*
- 4. Advocate for public access to rivers, lakes, the coast and other public lands where it does not already exist.*

The Wairarapa Coastal Strategy will need to address how these issues will be managed within the coastal environment.

The Marginal Strips and Scenic Reserves managed by DoC that provide access to the coastline are listed in Chapter 3 of this report. These include the Castlepoint Scenic Reserve, which is also listed in Tables 8-10 of the Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region. The significance of this is considered in more detail in the 'Planning Context and Methods' Technical Report.

### **(3) Local Government Act 1974**

This Act requires stopped roads along the margins of the coast (along Mean High Water Springs) to be vested in Council as esplanade reserves. The Local Government

Act 1974 also establishes the means by which Council may collect financial contributions for funding the acquisition, maintenance and development of reserves.

The process for disposing of surplus council land is considered in Part XIV of this Act. In particular, section 230(4) addresses the sale/exchange of land in instances where the land was vested in the council in trust or as an endowment. In these cases, the council can sell/exchange the land, in accordance with any of the original conditions of endowment, if the money acquired in the sale/exchange is used to acquire land for the same purpose. The full council is responsible for the sale of land, and the power of sale cannot be delegated to officers or subcommittees. Public notice must be given before the full council meets to decide whether or not to sell/exchange the land.

The primary determinant of whether land can be sold is whether there is a need to do so.

In selling land, the land must be sold for more than it was worth when bought or acquired. Land cannot be sold in contravention of the Reserves Act 1977.

The proposed Local Government Amendment Bill carries new provisions providing for councils to set development contributions for costs associated with the incremental provision of reserves and network infrastructure when granting resource consents, building consents, or authorisations for a service connection (clause 161). The Local Government Association stated in its submission on the Bill that this will “*resolve many problems faced by councils of districts with growing populations. Current powers which are drawn from the RMA based only on “environmental effects” have been shown to be insufficient to deal with the effects of growth on infrastructure*”. This issue is discussed in greater depth in the “Planning Context and Methods” technical report.

The Local Government Amendment Bill also prescribes under Part 7 (clause 126) that local authorities must use the Special Consultative Procedure before selling any park. “Park” is very broadly defined and could be interpreted as any asset based on land.

Section 650A1(i) of the Local Government Amendment (No 2) Act allows for district councils to undertake various works in the coastal environment including the erection and maintenance of: quays, docks, piers, wharves, jetties, launching ramps, and any other works for *‘the improvement, protection, management, or utilisation of waters within its district (subject to the controls established by the RMA)’*. To clarify responsibilities between the councils, a memorandum of understanding has been signed.

#### **(4) Public Works Act 1981**

The Public Works Act deals with the rights of central and local government to acquire private land for public purposes such as reserves (within the meaning of the Reserves Act 1977) and the procedures for acquiring and disposing of this land.

#### **(5) New Zealand Walkways Act 1990**

The Walkways Act provides for the establishment of walking tracks over public and private land. Walkways can be established and controlled by local authorities. Controlling authorities are responsible for maintenance and public safety. For walkways over private land, the Act allows authorities to negotiate a right-of-way easement or to lease the land.

#### **(6) Harbours Act 1950**

This act relate to the management of ‘wet’ areas of the coast, and enables bylaws to be imposed controlling such things from recreational and other use of the coastal marine area (including imposing fees on use), to the construction of slipways and jetties. The Harbours Act establishes Harbour Boards, which have rights to construct engineering structures such as wharfs and undertake works in the coastal marine area. The Wellington Regional Council administers the responsibilities of the Harbours Act.

#### **(7) District Council Bylaws**

The need to manage activities by bylaws is specifically referred to in South Wairarapa reserve management plans prepared in accordance with the Reserves Act, and should

also be referred to in the process of preparing plans for Carterton and Masterton Districts. Bylaws are generally intended to manage conflicts between various recreational activities and impose controls on such issues as dogs on beaches, motorbike activities and horse riding. Bylaws are established under the Local Government Act 1974.

Aside from Bylaws referred to in management plans, Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils rely on the Joint General Bylaws 1976 which address such topics as “Parks and Reserves” and “Beaches: Bathing and Control”. Dog Control bylaws have also been established in Carterton in 1997. With the exception of Dog Control bylaws, bylaws are New Zealand Standard 9201:1972 Model General Bylaws. Consequently they do not address specific activities on a site by site basis in coastal locations. They are, however, useful as a backstop when required. With the exception of bylaw standards for “Beaches: Bathing and Control”, these standards have been superseded by NZS 9201:1999. There is no replacement bylaw standard for “Beaches: Bathing and Control”.

In addition to these general provisions, the Masterton District Council imposes specific restrictions on access to the beach by:

- € Dogs. Restrictions are imposed on times and places where dogs can be walked, and where leashes are required.
- € Prohibiting motorised vehicles along Riversdale Beach.
- € Prohibiting the lighting of fires along the entire Masterton District coastline, unless a fire permit has been issued.
- € Prohibiting littering
- € Prohibiting liquor certain times, for example during Christmas, Labour weekend and New Year.

Masterton District Council empowers wardens under the Reserves Act and Litter Act 1979 to enforce these provisions. In most cases enforcement is not required, however, and instead the wardens educate perpetrators to prevent future offences.

## **(8) Historic Places Act 1993**

This Act gives protection to identified historic sites, or any archaeological or shipwreck sites which pre date 1900. Many such sites have recreational opportunities because of their cultural and/or heritage significance, however, access to these sites may need to be restricted because of the potential for damage. The list of archaeological sites is considered further in the “Heritage” Technical Report.

### **2.3 Summary**

Provision and enhancement of access to the coastal marine area are explicitly referred to in the RMA, which provides a hierarchy of policy statements and plans. Other legislation, including the Reserves Act, and Local Government Act provide opportunities to manage conflicts arising from access to the coast, as well as methods to provide access.

District plans for Masterton and Carterton move quite some way from the NZCPS by indicating that they will prioritise access in areas of significant value, rather than ensure that public access is available along the entire coast (subject to protecting the natural, physical and cultural features of an area). In contrast, South Wairarapa District Plan contains a policy to establish a complete public easement along the landward margin of the CMA. This creates potential for cross boundary issues whereby coastal reserves in South Wairarapa may be meeting demands of the districts of Carterton and Masterton on account of the lack of reserves in these districts. The extent to which this is occurring can be determined once a coastal users survey is completed.

The Wairarapa Coastal Strategy provides the opportunity to ensure that the methods and management approaches available under the various statutes achieve good coastal planning. This can be achieved by clarifying issues, objectives, policies and the particular outcomes to be achieved by using the various methods and management approaches.

The particular issues and objectives will become clear during the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy consultation process.

Failure to provide a common mandate, such as that offered by the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy will result in potential conflict for the ways these tools manage access and recreation.

Under plans and strategies prepared under the Reserves Act, there is an ability to develop a reserves acquisition and disposal policy. Such policies should outline criteria for acquisition and disposal of reserve lands to assist the process of assessing contributions to reserves, and/or possible purchase of land and to assist evaluation of existing reserve land. It is recommended that Masterton and Carterton District Council complete the process of preparing reserves plans, and that these plans acknowledge the need to develop a reserves acquisition and disposal policy.

## **Chapter 3**

# **Resource Inventory**

This chapter provides an inventory of recreation and access resources within the coastal environment by reviewing existing information on recreational activities and demands within Wairarapa. Information is provided on demands and trends for public access and recreation, including their spatial location.

At this stage it is not anticipated that this report will provide confirmation of the full range of demands and trends for public recreation opportunities. Such information cannot be compiled until coastal users have been approached. To this end a coastal users survey has been proposed. It is intended to undertake the survey over the summer period in early 2003.

This section builds on existing research documents, as well as issues identified in planning documents to identify an inventory of access and recreation opportunities within the Wairarapa Coastal environment.

### **3.1 Recreation Resources**

The types of recreational activities are constantly changing to meet developments in technology and demographic preferences, however recreational activities that are common to the Wairarapa coast include:

- € Recreational and charter fishing, including ancillary boat launching and car parking (e.g. Castlepoint, Tora Beach, Ngawi).
- € Sunbathing and passive recreation (e.g. Castlepoint, Riversdale Beach).
- € Swimming (e.g. Castlepoint, Riversdale Beach).
- € Diving, snorkelling and scuba.
- € Surfing, windsurfing, waterskiing, jet skis, and other forms of active recreation (e.g. Castlepoint, Lake Ferry).

- ∄ Sightseeing, including walking, quad tours, four wheel drive tours and the like (e.g. Tora Walkway).
- ∄ Boating (e.g. Castlepoint).
- ∄ Whitebaiting (e.g. Lake Ferry).
- ∄ Camping (e.g. Putangirua Pinnacles, Riversdale Beach).
- ∄ Exclusive accommodation, e.g. Wharekauhau.
- ∄ Farm stays and other visitor accommodation.
- ∄ Nature tourism.

The following activities, although not specific to the coastal environment, are often enhanced by a coastal location:

- ∄ Mountain Biking.
- ∄ Walking.
- ∄ Camping.
- ∄ Picnicking.
- ∄ Trail bike riding.
- ∄ Horse riding.
- ∄ Hunting.

Maps 1 to 23 show the location of the various Council's and DoC recreation reserves and open spaces within the Wairarapa. From these maps it is clear that there are a range of reserves within the Wairarapa. The largest of these are DoC reserves, which are managed for conservation purposes. These include:

- ∄ Honeycomb Rock walking track (located within privately owned Glenburn Station);
- ∄ Castlepoint Scenic Reserve;
- ∄ Aorangi (Haurangi) Forest Park;
- ∄ Putangirua Pinnacles;
- ∄ Whatarangi Bluff;
- ∄ Kupe's Sails; and,
- ∄ White Rock.



The majority of these reserves are located along the southern coastline between Ocean Beach and Cape Palliser. Recreational reserves and access to the coast north of Cape Palliser is more restricted, with less than half of the coastline in this area being accessible by public reserves.

## 3.2 Reserves Acquisition Surveys

Land managed by DoC as part of the conservation estate has been inherited from the previous Department, which, until DoC took over management of some of its landholdings, had responsibility for managing and acquiring land for access and recreation purposes.

Surveys on the management and proposed acquisition of lands for access and recreation purposes were undertaken by The Department of Lands and Survey during the 1970s and 1980s. The recommendations for reservation of land along the coast had the aim of achieving the following:

- (a) *“to provide public access to and along the coast;*
- (b) *to preserve the quality of the coast for future generations;*
- (c) *to provide a comprehensive system of protection along the coast for public recreation;*
- (d) *to preserve any natural, historical, scenic, scientific or other features;*
- (e) *to preserve habitat for species of waterfowl, wildlife and marine life.”*

Three county’s along the Wairarapa Coast were investigated; Featherston, Masterton, and Wairarapa South. Proposals were then made for reserves and recreation areas along the coastline. The reserve proposals were concentrated at rocky points or headlands and alongside river or stream mouths. Some of the proposals included areas which were already designated as proposed reserves in the operative district scheme of the day, whilst others were not considered in the scheme. Proposed areas to be acquired were outlined in the plans.

The survey also identified types of work that may be necessary to increase implementation of the identified areas, such as planting trees to provide shade.

With the disbandment of the Department of Land and Survey and consequential land management being inherited by DoC, the recommendations of the reports were never implemented, and much of the identified lands have since been developed. However, the reports are useful for identifying a range of with high recreational values as well as management options at these sites.

### 3.3 Recreation Values

As noted earlier, recreational activities within an area are dictated by the value people attribute to that area. In most cases, these values are not singular, and recreational users are often seeking to satisfy a number of desires in a single outing. Recreation behaviour is understood to be goal-directed and undertaken to satisfy desires for particular experiences. The quality of these experiences is often measured in terms of users overall satisfaction.

In order to identify the potential recreational opportunities of an area, the “Recreational Opportunity Spectrum” (ROS) has been devised<sup>2</sup>. The ROS is a system for classifying outdoor experiences. DoC use this method to identify opportunities along a continuum from urban to wilderness. It has eight main visitor categories and provides both an inventory and planning process.

Recreation experiences are affected by many subjective as well as situational factors:

- € The conditions encountered at an area;
- € Users’ expectations;
- € Any discrepancies between what users expect and what they actually find or experience;
- € Social and personal norms (shared "rules" or "standards" of good or bad, right or wrong, etc.);
- € Use levels; and
- € “Social interference”.

Perceptions of crowding can also reduce the quality of recreation experiences. Levels of perceived crowding vary and are influenced by such factors as<sup>3</sup>:

- € Number of encounters with other users;
- € Number of encounters preferred;
- € Number of encounters expected;
- € Discrepancy between actual and expected encounters;
- € Motivations for participation (e.g., solitude versus social interaction);
- € Preferences (desires);
- € Expectations (what was anticipated);
- € Behaviour (as opposed to the number) of others;
- € Visitor attitudes;
- € Type of area (e.g., primitive versus urban);
- € Location of contacts (e.g., trailhead versus campsite);
- € Proximity of others;
- € Size of group;
- € Size of group encountered;
- € User's experience level;
- € Perceived environmental disturbance;
- € Type of encounter; and
- € Obtrusiveness of visual impact (e.g., bright-coloured versus earth-toned clothes, tents, and equipment).

Understanding perceptions of the coastal environment recreational experiences are therefore necessary to understand recreational values. In order to achieve this, a coastal users survey has been proposed. The coastal users survey differs from other surveys that have recently been completed within the Wairarapa Coast, such as the Castlepoint survey (outlined below).

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<sup>2</sup> ROS is considered in more detail in section 5.2 of this report.

<sup>3</sup> Refer Moore, R. (1994)

## 3.4 Castlepoint Survey

From February to March 2002, Masterton District Council undertook a survey to provide information on preferences for managing Council assets within the Castlepoint area. The questions were wide ranging and included questions on such matters as the perceived need for signs, recreation reserves, street lighting and sealed car parks. Survey forms were sent out to 366 ratepayers, camping ground leaseholders and purchasers of sites in the recent Deliverance Cove subdivision. In total 190 forms (52%) were returned.

The survey findings are useful in that they provide some information on recreational use and access demands at Castlepoint. The main limitation, however, is that it relates explicitly to council owned assets and did not attempt to distinguish between areas or identify values attributed to specific areas.

The key relevant findings of the survey are outlined below:

- € **Recreation Reserves:** The provision of recreation reserves is considered sufficient within the Castlepoint area. Of those who expressed an opinion, 78% of respondents considered the development of new recreation reserves as being a low priority, or not a priority. This contrasts with 22% of respondents who considered that it was a medium or high priority. The greatest proportion of respondents indicating the need for recreation reserves were from owners of holiday homes in Castlepoint's urban areas. The only high priority area identified for the establishment of a recreation reserve was at Deliverance Cove Subdivision.
  
- € **Jetty:** Opinions were more divided on the provision of a jetty at Castlepoint, with 48% of residents saying there was a need, versus 52% saying there was not.

- € **Scenic Reserve.** Results were received on the development of new scenic reserves within the area, with opinions being split with similar numbers for and against.
- € **Car Parking:** Information gathered on the Mataikona Road area confirmed that parking of vehicles and trailers is causing congestion for visitors to the coastal area. This has the potential to inhibit coastal access, and discourage visitors from the area. The survey respondents recommended that additional car parking be made available. The majority of visitors arrive to the Wairarapa coast by private vehicle and consequently vehicle parking is likely to significantly impact access at given sites.

Respondents did not provide information on whether access to the CMA was considered suitable or whether any impediments to access were present. Another limitation of the survey is that it only surveyed ratepayers and camping ground leaseholders, and not visitors to the coast.

## 3.5 Riversdale Beach Survey

Masterton District Council also undertook a similar survey for Riverdale Beach as that for Castlepoint. The survey was undertaken from November to December 2000 to provide information on preferences for managing Council assets within the Riversdale Beach area. Local residents were targeted and 207 responses were received from 332 survey questionnaires.

The key relevant findings of the survey are outlined below:

### ***Recreation Reserves:***

- € The demand for additional recreation reserves was identified within the Riversdale Beach area. Of those who expressed an opinion, 53% of respondents indicated that they considered the further development of Northern Recreation and Esplanade reserve as being either a high priority or medium priority. 38% of respondents indicated that they considered the provision of reserves in these areas as being a low priority or not a priority.

- € The development of Southern reserve was considered a lower priority, with only 43 % of respondents indicating it was a priority, against 54% of respondents indicating it was not a priority or was a low priority.
- € The relative priority of the northern reserve over the southern may be reflected in the popularity of the northern reserve for swimming, and fact that lifesavers are also located in this area. This reserve is also recognised as being the first reserve that visitors to the beach encounter, and thereby provides first impressions of the coastal settlement.
- € The water quality of Motuwaireka Stream and Lagoon was indicated as being a concern, with 88% of respondents indicating a desire to improve the water quality in this area, against 9% who did not.
- € Compared against other Council services, the provision of reserves and recreation were considered as being the second highest priority behind beach and sand dune protection.

***Car Parking:***

- € The provision of sealed car parking opposite the surf club was not considered necessary by residents, with 60% of respondents indicating it was not a priority or a low priority, compared with 32% of respondents saying it was.
- € In total 63% of respondents did not consider that there was a need for additional car parking anywhere at Riversdale Beach.
- € The approach to car parking reflects the majority of resident's views that the area should not be overly developed, and instead natural areas should be retained.

### ***Beach and Sand Dune Issues:***

- € The need for warning signs for swimmers was identified as a priority by residents, with 93% of respondents indicating that the provision of signs was either a high or medium priority, against 5% of respondents saying it was not a priority or a low priority.
- € Measures to protect sand dunes (e.g. defined beach access tracks, protection from vehicles and other native revegetation projects) were considered a priority by residents with 89% of respondents indicating it being either a high or medium priority, against 10% of respondents saying it was not a priority or a low priority.
- € The priority of beach and sand dune protection was also reflected in comparison with other Council responsibilities (43% of respondents saying that it was the highest priority) including roading and associated services (18%), reserves and recreation (15%), and other facilities (19%).

### ***Amenities and Activities:***

- € Dogs roaming without supervision was noted as being an issue by 55% of respondents. This compares with 40% of respondents who did not consider dogs as being an issue. The specific problems, which can inhibit access to the coast, include: attacking joggers and walkers and fouling footpaths.
- € Quad bikes on the beach were not considered by most respondents as being an issue, with 57% of respondents saying there wasn't a problem compared with 35% of respondents saying there was.
- € The use of jet skis and personal water craft was also not considered a problem by Riversdale Beach residents, with 61% of respondents saying they did not consider them cause for complaint, against 30% of respondents who said they did.

The survey was targeted to residents of Riversdale Beach and did not provide information from visitors to the area. Limited information was provided on the purpose of reserves and whether these are intended to improve access to the coast, or the types of recreation opportunities. Likewise, limited indication was obtained of the

extent to which water quality at Motuwaireka Stream and Lagoon is inhibiting access to the coast.

### **3.6 Wairarapa Coastal Strategy Discussion Document**

The Wairarapa Coastal Strategy Discussion Document invited submissions from a range of key stakeholders, including major landholders in the coastal environment. This did not include visitors to the coast, or camping ground owners. Submissions on the Discussion Document identified a number of access and recreation related issues. These are summarised below:

- € Maintain existing levels of access;
- € Retention and enhancement of access along coast important. Need more services for users (toilets etc.);
- € Castlepoint is recognised as the only safe boat launching area in the area, this will increase pressure in the future;
- € Areas should be set aside for recreational fishing, and commercial fishing should not be allowed to occur close to shore;
- € Access should be maintained for recreational users and recreational boaters;
- € Council's land acquisition policies should link 'gaps' which are privately owned in order to provide access to coast;
- € Access to beach should be provided from every road end;
- € Access is plentiful and well managed by Council; and
- € Access is not a problem, except for larger boats.

The submissions represented a range of sometimes-conflicting views on the coastal environment.



## 3.7 DoC Reserves

As noted in Chapter 2 previously, DoC manage a range of recreation reserves, scenic reserves, stewardship areas and marginal strips. These areas provide access and recreational opportunities and are listed below:

### *DoC Scenic Reserves and Marginal Strips:*

Name	Location and summary
Kupe's Sail Rock Recreation Reserve	A coastal reserve (east of Ngawhihi, south Wairarapa), featuring an outcrop of young sandstone, with a triangular face sloping upwards at about 45 degrees. (There is a second sail to the west of the reserve but this land remains in private ownership). Access is off Cape Palliser Road, about 2km west of the Cape Palliser Lighthouse.
Coastal Cliffs Stewardship	A series of coastal escarpments, gullies, and visual landscape features, north of Te Kopi and west of Hurupi Stream. Access is only form the beach, by foot or trail bike.
Mataperu Marginal Strip	A strip of coastal flats and beach, for public access to the coast. Its location is in South Wairarapa, from Waitetuna Stream to Ngapoyiki Stream. Access is along the coast on foot from Cape Palliser Light House or from White Rock Road.
Te Awati Marginal Strip	A strip of coastal flats and beach for public access to the coast. It location is from the mouth of the Awhea River north to the Oterei River
Tora Marginal Strip	Coastal flats and beach, located south of Oro Stream to the south of Awheaiti Stream
Whareama Marginal Strip	A strip of coastal flats and beach for public access to the coast.
Tinui Marginal Strip	A strip of coastal flats and beach for public access to the coast.
Kaiwhata Marginal Strip	A strip of coastal flats and beach for public access to the coast.
Riversdale Marginal Strip	A strip of coastal flats and beach for public access to the coast.
Motuwaireka Marginal Strip	A strip of coastal flats and beach for public access to the coast.
Whakataki Marginal Strip	A strip of coastal flats and beach for public access to the coast.
Castlepoint No1 Stewardship	A strip of coastal flats and beach for public access to the coast.
Castlepoint No2 Stewardship	A strip of coastal flats and beach for public access to the coast.
Castlepoint Scenic Reserve	A strip of coastal flats and beach for public access to the coast.
Otahome Stewardship	A strip of coastal flats and beach for public access to the coast.

DoC has undertaken some surveys of use in areas of land it manages. The surveys provide an indication of the relative popularity of the various scenic reserves and marginal strips.

In particular, limited visitor statistics are available from DoC for the Putangirua Pinnacles for the years 1988/89, and from 1990/91 to 1992/93. These indicate that a maximum of 20,000 visitors were received in 1992/3. These visitors arrived by way of 6,000 vehicles. The least number of visitors (6,500) arrived in 1990/91. These surveys do not provide any further information on the preference of visitors, or demographic composition.

Visitor surveys do not indicate preferences, expectations or demands and instead provide only the total number of visitors to the area.

## **3.8 Summary**

A range of recreational and commercial activities are undertaken along the Wairarapa coastline. These are creating competing demands for open space and access to the coast.

It is necessary to prioritise management of areas according to the level of expectation and vulnerability.

Landholders consider that there is already sufficient access to the coastal environment and that existing levels should be maintained. This opinion needs to be considered against that of visitors to the coast, who are not represented in survey results.

Continued access to the beach is noted as being a particular issue at both Riversdale Beach and Castlepoint. This is likely to create competing demands for access. In each case residents have noted particular expectations as to how this conflict should be managed and the impact this should have on the development of the area. Possible locations for access and recreation reserves are also identified. The extent to which

these reserves can contribute to access and recreation opportunities is not clear however.

Surveys are necessary to determine the extent to which additional access is required and the form of this access. Surveys are also necessary to determine areas where access should be restricted due to physical, cultural or ecological vulnerabilities.

Interpretations of access within coastal settlements are linked to the effects on people's recreational experiences (such as reduced car parking and vehicle access) and the impact on the environment (for example the likelihood of access opening up illegal activities such as paua poaching).<sup>4</sup>

There is a strong correlation between the provision of access and the proximity of public roads.

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<sup>44</sup> This issue is considered in greater detail in Chapter 4.



## **Chapter 4**

# **Vulnerabilities**

This chapter identifies those issues that act as an impediment to recreation and access within the coastal environment. To this end, the following vulnerabilities to access and recreation activities have been identified within the Wairarapa coastal environment.

- € Physical impacts
- € Topographic constraints
- € Road network and property ownership constraints
- € Incompatible recreational activities

In assessing recreational activities, it is also necessary to consider their ancillary activities. For example, the activity of fishing may require car parking, boat ramps and toilets. Although fishing as an activity occurs within the CMA (below mean high water springs), it is also dictated by land use above the line of mean high water springs. Consequently, the effects of access and recreation span both above and below mean high water springs within the coastal environment.

This chapter will outline the vulnerabilities of recreational activities within, and access to, the coastal environment and in so doing provide preliminary information to assist in developing a matrix of compatibility for various activities.

## **4.1 Physical Impacts**

The physical impacts of recreation activities can affect soils, wildlife, vegetation, water, and air quality. Historic, cultural<sup>5</sup>, and archaeological resources are also vulnerable to impacts caused by recreational activities.

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<sup>5</sup> The "Heritage" Technical Report provides information on cultural and heritage resources.

Using the example of fishing, ancillary activities such as car parking, collectively determine the potential impact of fishing access on the environment. Other activities, such as trailbikes, have a direct impact on the environment and can damage sensitive dune vegetation if undertaken in ecologically sensitive areas. The primary physical impacts of access from recreational activities include:

- € Rubbish
- € Root damage and removal of vegetation resulting in reduced biodiversity.
- € Disturbance to roosting and marine mammal habitats (e.g. seals)
- € Physical damage to geological features
- € Polluted water supplies
- € Vandalism
- € Hazards e.g. fire

Information on ecological values has been provided in the “Landscape and Ecology” Technical Report. In addition to the sites identified in that report, areas which are given particular protection under the RPS for their indigenous flora or fauna, physical or landscape features, or on account of their cultural significance, are:

- € Cape Palliser (Haurangi State Forest Park), including the lighthouse,
- € “Kupe’s Sail” and views of the South Island
- € Castlepoint scenic reserve, (including the lighthouse),
- € Honeycomb Rock (foreshore and seabed)
- € Kahau Rocks,
- € White Rock (amuri limestone)
- € Whakataki-Mataikona coast (tongue and groove erosion patterns).
- € The sand dunes from Whareama River to Riversdale, at Ocean Beach, Te Humenga Point, west of Cape Palliser, Castlepoint, White Rock and Uruti Point.

The overview of statutory provisions outlined in Chapter 2 confirms that access should not be provided to the detriment of the above areas. The extent to which access is currently available to these areas is shown on Maps 1 - 23.

The physical impact of recreational activities varies according to the type of activity and nature of the environment. In cases where tracks are provided, impacts are generally greatest along the track. In other areas, the physical impacts of recreation activities are more dispersed. In each case, the level of impact is determined by factors such as soil characteristics, slope, type of ecosystem, level and type of use<sup>6</sup>. The fact that coastal environments are more exposed renders them highly susceptible to damage from erosion, particularly arising from damage to dune vegetation.

In managing the impacts of informal recreational use along the coast, a common approach is to limit access to tracks only. The construction of tracks can, however, also result in physical impacts to the coastal environment. The initial construction of a track may cause greater resource impact than subsequent track usage. In many cases along the Wairarapa coastline such as along the foreshore east of Whatarangi Point, informal tracks have formed from continued coastal access by quad bikes and trail bikes. The tracks affect overland drainage and thereby increase rates of erosion within a particularly vulnerable area.

One aspect of protecting natural resources is the relationship between amount of use and levels of physical impact. Studies of the effects of camping indicate that the greatest environmental impact occurs with low use. In other words, the initial users of lightly used areas cause the most damage to soils and vegetation. The rate of degradation generally decreases after a certain amount of damage has been done. This has important implications for the issue of whether to concentrate or disperse access. In settings where this same relationship holds, dispersing access to relatively unused areas may greatly increase environmental impacts.

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<sup>6</sup> Refer for example Conflicts on Multiple-Use Trails: Synthesis of the Literature and State of the Practice from <http://www.mountainbike.co.nz/politics/usa/conflicts/conflict3.html>

From the analysis it is clear that evaluations of impacts should be made on a site-specific or area-specific basis and linked to particular users, due to the many interrelated factors affecting them.

## 4.2 Topographic Constraints

The topography/landform determines the range of recreational activities able to be undertaken in an area, through the provision of access, and the natural features which contribute to the quality of recreational experiences. For example, although steep cliffs may restrict access to the coast, they also provide a median for paraponters or hang-gliders to enjoy the coastal environment. Likewise, steep cliffs may also contribute to an areas sense of isolation, which in turn, encourages a particular form of recreational experience.

An understanding of topography enables a picture to be drawn of the various types of recreational activities suited to various areas.

Particular topographic constraints within the Wairarapa include:

- ∄ Soft sand restricting vehicle access, for example at Whangaimoana;
- ∄ Steep cliffs restricting all forms of access, for example at the southern end of Lake Ferry;
- ∄ The lake mouth restricting pedestrian access from Lake Ferry towards the western side of Palliser Bay; and
- ∄ Deep waters and strong undercurrents off Lake Ferry and other areas, restricting swimming.



## 4.3 Road Network and Property Ownership Constraints

Access and use of the coastal environment is also dictated by whether the area is served by a road or other legal access. The distance of the Wairarapa Coast from the larger settlements of Masterton, Carterton, and even Wellington, results in the majority of visitors arriving to the coast by vehicle. As a consequence, road networks are the primary determinant of access to the coast. Maps 1 - 23 show the location of the primary road networks which provide access within close proximity to the coast.

The relative distance of the coast from the larger urban settlements, results in many visitors to the coastal environment seeking a ‘get away from it all’ experience. As a consequence, the quality of roading networks can contribute to the overall recreational experience, and not necessarily detract from the level of access. A particular example of this is the emergence of 4WD day trips to the coast, such as to Tora Beach, which are encouraged by the quality of experience and sense of remoteness.

Maps 1 to 23 also show the extent to which private land has the potential to restrict access from legal roads. From those maps it can be seen that less than half of the coastline north of Cape Palliser is accessible by public road. In many cases access across private land is provided by encumbrances or easements, in other areas the level of provision is more informal. In many cases the practical extent of access, including by easements or marginal strips, is unclear and not evidenced by signs or other information in each location. What is taken as public access to the shore often crosses private land. Such present access is vulnerable and cannot be guaranteed for the future.

In areas where legal public access is not provided across private land, some property owners are charging vehicle access fees for boat launching. This has occurred more recently at Sandy Bay, Tora in South Wairarapa.

In some cases, unformed legal roads provide access to the coastal environment. Unformed legal roads are physically undefined legal accessways of public land in

rural areas. They were included on historical survey plans to be roads, but for various reasons have never been formed. They are legal public reserves where the public has all the rights that a formed legal road offers, unless a by-law is formulated to regulate use. Thus, dogs are allowed, as are mountain bikes, motor bikes, four wheel drive vehicles and horses provided that they remain within the road boundaries. Firearms are not permitted to be used on formed or unformed legal roads. Remaining within the legal road boundaries can be a problem if they are poorly delineated. Traditionally, property owners, such as farmers, have used such roads for everyday farm activities, such as grazing. This is appropriate, but legally the farmer cannot prevent someone using the roadway, nor should they fence across the road. Gates are acceptable following consultation with the local authority, provided that they are not locked. Stiles in fences across legal roads have been accepted as an appropriate compromise at times.

An impediment to unformed legal roads is the practical implications of the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992. Most unformed legal roads are considered as being part of the farming operation, and are thereby considered a work place under the Act. Users of the unformed legal road are therefore visiting a work place, and the farmer has a duty of care and must advise them of hazards. This situation is likely to discourage landowners from allowing access across private land to the coast, and lead to the construction of impediments to access. The farmer cannot, however, prevent access along an unformed legal road, because the road gives rights of access to all.

## **4.4 Incompatible Recreational Activities**

There are a range of recreational activities, which if undertaken within close proximity to each other, detract from the overall quality of experience for either one or both of the activities involved. Examples of such activities may include trail biking and picnicking. In most cases, the recreational experience is determined by values afforded to a particular place and therefore levels of incompatibility are site specific, for example, notions of remoteness within an area. In most cases an area will have many different values that enhance the range of recreational activities. It is when all

activities which might take advantage of these values are able to occur in one place and at one time, that the potential for conflict occurs.

For example, a walker's enjoyment might be reduced by hearing trail bikes near a conservation boundary, or an equestrian user might be upset to see many cars with bike racks at the carpark before beginning a ride. Trail bike riders may also disturb bird watchers.

In order to effectively manage recreational activities with the intention of minimising conflict, it is necessary to understand the level of compatibility. Given that this conflict is site specific and recognises such issues as the topography of the area, it is necessary to identify compatibility through surveys of coastal users. The purpose of a survey is to identify values identified with particular areas, as well as the recreational opportunities associated with those values and consistency with other recreational activities.

In previous studies of recreational activities, several themes and patterns have been found to relate to conflict between recreational activities. These themes are:

- ∉ Level of technology - Participants in activities that use different levels of technology often experience conflict with one another. Examples include jet skiers and swimmers, walkers and motorcyclists, and non-motorised and motorised boat users.
- ∉ Conflict is asymmetrical - Many times, feelings of conflict are one-way. For example, walkers dislike encountering trailbikers, but trailbikers are not as unhappy about encountering walkers. In general, recreationists enjoy meeting their own kind, but dislike uses that are faster, noisier and more mechanized than their own. In some cases, this can create a 'reverse sensitivity' situation, such as when swimmers are in areas designated for water skiers.
- ∉ Attitudes toward and perceptions of the environment - Users in conflict have been found to have different attitudes toward the environment and may perceive the environment differently. Perceptions may be influenced by when the user first visited the area, with long-time and frequent visitors being most

sensitive to contacts with others. People who view the environment as an integral part of the experience are more susceptible to conflict than those who see the environment as just a setting for their activity.

- ∄ Violation of norms - Individuals and groups with different standards of behaviour (social and individual norms that define what behaviour is appropriate) often conflict with one another. For example, many fishermen resent canoeists who shout and yell. Norms appear to be more useful than goals for predicting conflict (e.g., a walker and a motorcyclist may share the same goals of experiencing nature and escaping from the city but may cause conflict for one another).
- ∄ Level of tolerance - Level of tolerance for others is related to level of conflict. Levels of tolerance vary widely among individuals depending upon personal norms and situational factors such as group size, where the contact occurs, when the user first visited the area, motivations, and frequency of use. Levels of tolerance are lowest in "wilderness" areas.
- ∄ Environmental dominance - Users who differ in terms of the importance they give to "conquering" the environment are likely to conflict.

Information on these types of conflict will be obtained during the coastal users survey. Submissions on the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy Discussion Document also raised a number of issues relating to access, and recreational use of the coastal environment. These are listed below:

- ∄ More access could lead to more poaching of coastal resources – there should be no public access or new roads alongside important fish and paua breeding areas to protect fish stock.
- ∄ Access along the beach should be controlled, for example no horses below the line of mean high water springs.
- ∄ Access is not always appropriate in areas of significant vegetation.
- ∄ Beach dependant activities should be provided for, but not others such as biking, which have other areas to locate.

- € Some coastal protection work is essential to maintain access – however this intervention should not undermine areas where these processes are recognised as having significant landscape values.
- € People should contribute to maintenance and liabilities if they want to have access over land.
- € Concern that visitors do not respect fire bans and leave rubbish.

## 4.4 Summary

Vulnerabilities in terms of access and recreation are determined by topographic and physical constraints, the extent of legal access, individual values of the coastal environment and cultural sites. On this basis, evaluations of impacts should be made on a site-specific or area-specific basis due to the many interrelated factors affecting them. This evaluation will be possible with the completion of the coastal user survey.

Particular vulnerabilities in terms of access and recreational activities are summarised below:

### (1) Recreation

Recreational use can cause an interrelated set of impacts to occur (e.g., damage to natural resources caused by one group can lead to feelings of conflict or crowding in another group). There is no single predictable response to recreational use.

Impacts are related to level of use, but the strength and nature of the relationships vary widely and are influenced by many aspects of use intensity and a variety of situational variables.

Tolerance to impacts vary (e.g., all individuals do not respond the same way to encounters with other visitors, just as all soils or plants react differently to trampling).

Impacts are activity and site specific. Some activities create impacts more quickly or to a greater degree than others. Impacts even from the same activity can vary

according to such factors as mode of transportation, characteristics of visitors, party size, and behaviour. Given a basic tolerance level to a particular type of recreation, the outcome of use may still depend on the time and place of the encounter or disturbance.

## **(2) Access**

Access to the coast falls into three broad criteria, according to the types of constraints:

- € High –where access is greatest due to facilities, nearby resident population and high level of services, e.g. Castlepoint and Riversdale Beach.
- € Medium - limited services, medium distance from resident populations, and reasonable levels of access, e.g. Lake Ferry, Whangaimoana Beach, Putangirua Pinnacles, Ngawi, Mataikona and Whakataki.
- € Low – no services, isolated from resident population, poor access due to either topography or road network, e.g. Whatarangi, Tora, White Rock etc.

Vulnerabilities within each of the areas varies, with many of the highest levels of impact occurring in low access areas.

Access should be controlled in areas where physical, cultural or ecological values need to be protected.

Impediments to recreational opportunities, caused by such factors as recreational conflict, will inhibit access to the coast.

Coast surveys will provide information on areas where access is considered insufficient either because of topography or road networks, and an impediment to recreational opportunities.

Subdivision development increases demand for recreation and access to the coast. In some cases, informal arrangements, which have provided historical access, are revoked and priority is given to access for purchasers of land. In other cases, the

increased population reduces available areas for car parking and recreational opportunities by visitors.

Recreational opportunities can be lost as a result of either the direct impact of development, or indirect effects resulting in changes in perception of the coastal environment.

In some areas access to the coast has developed across private land. This access is not secured. Particular examples of the conflict this has created have been seen in recent years at Sandy Bay on the eastern coast.





## **Chapter 5**

# **Responses**

This chapter provides a commentary on how demand and/or constraints might be managed in the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy and beyond. In so doing, this chapter outlines a strategic model and processes for planning, provision for, and monitoring of recreation, public access and open space opportunities.

It is noted that the methods identified for planning, investment and provision of public access, recreation and open space opportunities should be viewed as part of a comprehensive approach to coastal management.

### **5.1 Existing Responses**

Existing responses to issues of access are contained within principles, objectives and policies outlined in various management plans prepared throughout the Wairarapa area by the Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Councils as well as in relevant RMA Plans (refer Chapter 2 of this report)<sup>7</sup>. As a consequence, concepts of access and the need to provide recreational opportunities vary between councils.

The South Wairarapa Reserves Strategy and Management Plan is a good example of reserves management assisting access and recreation opportunities. These documents provide principles that reflect requirements to provide continued access and recreation opportunities. These do not, however, identify priority areas for management, or identify policies on land acquisition or disposal. Many council's in other areas of NZ have resolved this issue through the development of 'Open Space Strategies'. Such a strategy could outline criteria which councils are intending to meet in the provision of reserves or open space. Without assessment of reserves against such criteria, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of reserve space.

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<sup>7</sup> The implications of this on private property rights are considered in more detail in the '*Planning Context and Methods*' Technical Report.

Although the RMA provides for maintaining and enhancing access to the coastal environment as a matter of national importance, there is some thought within the Wairarapa, that access is already sufficient, that there is no need to enhance access any further, and that doing so may have adverse impacts, for example the impacts of overfishing if new areas are made accessible.

Discussions with Masterton District Council's Recreation Asset Manager indicate that it is felt that there are sufficient recreation reserves within Masterton District to meet current demand. At present MDC manages a number of DoC estate reserves on behalf of the public. The Masterton District Council will provide additional reserves as a requirement of the District Plan under other instances. This will be considered on a case by case basis and will be dependant on location and the needs of the area and residents.

The above approach fails to recognise the impact of additional development on existing recreational values or access requirements. In other areas of the region, such as the Flat Point development, additional reserves have been acquired as part of subdivision to ensure access to the coast, and its use for recreational purposes, is maintained and enhanced.

It is worth noting that the acquisition of land by DoC is not based on the provision of access, unlike its predecessor the Department of Lands and Survey. Criteria for acquisition rely on the ecological and biodiversity significance of the land. Furthermore, the Conservation Act 1987 and Reserves Act 1977 also provide for restrictions on public access in order to protect natural and historic resources. The Wellington Conservation Management Strategy 1996-2005 also notes that:

*Demand for walking access over private land appears to be rising. However, the costs associated with establishing walkways are high and the Department's resources are stretched just maintaining the existing track system. Walking opportunities are seen as a more cost-effective way of expanding the walking network. The Wellington conservancy areas where walking opportunities would provide the greatest good are close to urban centres and in the seasonally popular holiday areas.*

With this in mind, it is unlikely under current policy that further land will be acquired for access purposes and it is possible that opportunities to increase access will be lost.

## **5.2 Recommended Responses**

The preceding analysis has outlined the range of existing responses to provide for access, recreation and open space. This section reviews the range of methods in addition to those currently adopted.

### **(1) Need for Ongoing Monitoring**

The various district councils and the Regional Council currently have a limited knowledge of recreational trends, and existing areas of conflict and demand in the coastal environment. The absence of any recent district or even region-wide analysis of recreational demand is a contributing factor. This paucity of information is proving to be an impediment to effective strategic planning for provision of recreational space and infrastructure. The development of an Open Space Strategy for the region may address this issue. A number of objectives and targets can be developed through this process. Monitoring these targets will be important.

### **(2) Asset Management**

There is currently an absence of an asset management database or plan on a regional scale, identifying such information as the location and extent of areas where public access to and along the coastal marine area is provided.

An asset management plan can be a useful tool for managing conflict. The South Wairarapa Rural Reserves Management Plan currently controls a range of activities through bylaws with the purpose of avoiding conflict. The plans could also be extended to include information on likely coastal users to improve behaviour and practice within the coastal environment. For example, avoiding litter, recognising the significance of dune vegetation, or being courteous to other people.

Possible site specific management options<sup>8</sup> that can be included in asset management plans, are considered below:

- € Inform visitors about crowded conditions they may encounter in certain areas
- € Encourage particular behaviour and activities
- € Inform visitors about conflicting uses they may encounter in certain areas
- € Encourage use of less popular access points and backcountry areas
- € Encourage off-season use
- € Designate reserves for different types of visitor use
- € Encourage weekday use
- € Encourage tours and large groups to utilise lesser used areas
- € Prohibit activities within defined areas

The above options can be adopted through bylaws, or other similar management approaches.

Surveys in other locations have identified the need for councils to establish a consistent system of interpretation and directional material for the various recreational facilities, such as boat ramps, beach reserves and walkways. This information could be relayed at key intersections.

Interpretive signs can also be used to provide information on particular ecological or physical features. These signs inform visitors of the particular values of an area and contribute to an educational and/or social experience. In so doing, they can encourage increased access to the coast by rewarding visitors with information that a recreational outing is attempting to provide.

### **(3) Access to the Water**

The provision of access to and along the coastal marine area is provided for in Part II of the RMA, and RMA planning documents. Consequently, in managing conflicting

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<sup>8</sup> An example of this approach has been adopted by Dunedin City Council in its "Draft Track Policy and Strategy"

demand for space within the coastal environment, priority is given to those activities which require access to the coastal marine area provided that various matters in Part II are satisfied. Some of the activities that require a coastal location, and those that are enhanced by a coastal location, are listed in section 3.1 of this report.

The distinction between access to the coastal marine area (the water), and the coastal environment as a whole is not generally recognised in Reserves Strategies or Plans prepared under the Reserves Act. Instead those documents give equal priority to access to the coastline and to natural features. This issue is significant when considering the need for further land acquisition and the priority placed on maintaining access to the coastal environment. Recognising the need to protect access to the water would assist the level of integration of such documents with the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy.

Maps 24 to 46 indicate potential areas where access to the coast can be enhanced. These areas generally provide vehicle access to within close proximity of, or directly to, the coast, but access is required across privately owned land. Acquisition of land in these areas, or the provision of voluntary methods such as easements across private land, will secure access for the future. These areas include:

- |                                                     |                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ∄ Whakataki River Mouth (Map 24)                    | ∄ Stony Bay and Hiwikirikiri (Map 36) |
| ∄ Whareama River Mouth (Map 25)                     | ∄ Te Oroi (Map 37)                    |
| ∄ Two kilometres north of Riversdale Beach (Map 26) | ∄ Oroi Stream (Map 38)                |
| ∄ Kaiwhata River Mouth (Map 27)                     | ∄ White Rock (Map 39)                 |
| ∄ Flat Point (Map 28)                               | ∄ Ngapotiki (Map 40)                  |
| ∄ Waikekeno Stream Mouth (Map 29)                   | ∄ Mangatoetoe (Map 41)                |
| ∄ Horewai Point (Map 30)                            | ∄ Te Humenga Point (Map 42)           |
| ∄ Kahau Rocks (Map 31)                              | ∄ South of Whatarangi (Map 43)        |
| ∄ Honeycomb Rock (Map 32)                           | ∄ The Pinnacles (Map 44)              |

€ Glendhu Rocks (Map 33)

€ Whangaimoana Beach  
(Map 45)

€ Okoropunga Stream (Map 34)

€ Ocean Beach (Map 46)

€ Oterei River Mouth (Map 35)

In addition to these areas, public access can also be improved in locations where rights to access across Council, DOC or other Crown land is already provided, but a lack of information prevents the public from effectively utilising this access.

## **(4) Esplanade Reserve Policy**

The role that esplanade areas can play in providing for public access and recreational use of the coast is an important one, bearing in mind the requirements in Section 6 of the RMA.

Public ownership of land adjacent to the coast is important where councils want to provide recreational facilities such as walking tracks, boat launching ramps and jetties<sup>9</sup>. The same situation applies where councils want to enhance the amenity or conservation values through active management. The provisions of the district plans may need revisiting in order to ensure that there is a stronger policy focus on providing public access to the coast through esplanade reserves/strips and access strips.

## **(5) Regional Parks**

In other areas of Wellington, the Regional Council has provided regional parks (for example Battle Hill, East Harbour and Rimutaka regional parks), through specific enabling legislation. Sections 598 and 601 of the LGA empower territorial authorities to promote community facilities (such as reserves) either jointly or with other local authorities, and district councils can potentially establish sub regional parks. There are no such regional parks along the Wairarapa coast.

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<sup>9</sup> (Tonkin & Taylor, Reyrburn & Bryant. Reserves Requirements Study – Part 2 – Esplanade Reserves. Sept 1994).

## **(6) Coastal Walkway**

The coastal walkway is another initiative which is generally supported by the community, and which would significantly increase recreational opportunities within the district, as well as generating economic benefits from tourism. Policy 4.1.7 of the Rural Reserves Management Plan for SWDC identifies possible locations of coastal walkways, including from Cape Palliser Lighthouse to Honeycomb Rocks, and at Palliser Road road-end carpark, White Rock and Te Rakauwhakamataku Point reserves.

Issues to be considered include multiple agency involvement, Maori cultural issues, neighbours privacy and amenity values, safety and liability, ecological impacts, ownership and legal access. Further work is necessary to implement coastal walkways, including identifying legal status of land, and the impacts of erosion on continued access.

## **(7) Planning Processes**

The key planning models to recreation planning are the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) and Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) processes.

These processes were developed as a means of dealing with recreation carrying capacity issues in wilderness areas and national parks. These processes also have application outside of protected areas and to issues other than recreation management, such as the coastal environment. For this reason, the technical reports prepared as part of this process can be used to provide information outlined within each of the processes.

### ***Limits of Acceptable Change***

LAC essentially defines a management plan for a given area. It thereby has useful applications to coastal planning. There are nine steps in the LAC process:

1. Identify area issues, concerns, and opportunities (ICOs)
2. Define and describe Opportunity Classes (e.g. pristine, primitive, semi-primitive)
3. Select indicators of social and resource conditions
4. Inventory resource and social conditions
5. Specify standards for resource and social indicators
6. Identify alternative Opportunity Class Allocations
7. Identify management actions for each alternative
8. Evaluations and selection of preferred alternative
9. Implement actions and monitor conditions

In sum, the planning procedure consists of a series of interrelated steps leading to development of a set of measurable objectives that define desired conditions. The planning process also identifies the management actions necessary to maintain or achieve those conditions. The approach outlined in preparation of technical reports for the development of the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy can be managed to contribute to the knowledge base for each step.

### ***Recreational Opportunity Spectrum***

The main difference between ROS and LOC is that ROS looks at protecting resource conditions in an area, whereas LAC looks at what conditions are desired in an area and then seeks to protect these.

The Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) defines a spectrum of recreational opportunities that users seek and expect in different settings. The spectrum runs from primitive, semi-primitive, semi-primitive motorised, roaded, natural, rural, to urban.

The value of a ROS approach lies in the recognition that it accepts that opportunities sought by recreationists range from readily accessible and highly developed areas to undeveloped primitive areas in remote locations. LAC is a more prescriptive approach, which uses the ROS model to define acceptable recreation conditions in certain areas.



The LAC system differs in that it not only recognises the differing conditions sought by recreationists in differing settings, but also makes a value judgment as to set limits beyond which resource conditions become unacceptable. It describes levels, beyond which use should not be allowed to occur.

The LAC system changes the emphasis from determining the amount of recreational use allowed to defining acceptable conditions and managing for them in various ways.

1. Determine how wilderness visitors perceive the relative importance of various aspects of the resource and social setting (to aid in selecting indicators).
2. Learn how visitors evaluate various degrees of resource impact (to help define standards).
3. Develop and test monitoring techniques for social indicators.
4. Develop, test, and evaluate a wide variety of management practices.

As a management approach, researchers have used three primary approaches to select indicators of wilderness experiences: focus groups representing key stakeholders and management, interdisciplinary teams of specialists, or surveys of visitors to the wilderness. More recent research has changed focus from quantitative methods based on certain premises, to qualitative approaches that make fewer assumptions. Using this approach, on-site qualitative interviews and experience sampling methods are used to identify the major dimensions of the visitor experience.

Wildernesses, and places within wilderness that receive heavy recreation use, are typically allocated the most wilderness management resources. Some argue that more resources should be allocated to lightly used wilderness areas<sup>10</sup> because these are the places that are most precious, most vulnerable, and most responsive to management. These resources should be used to monitor conditions and implement management actions where needed to keep these places from degrading.

Aside from defining strategic objectives and policies, ROS and LUC can be used in the following manner:

1. To aid understanding of user needs.
2. To attempt to meet expectations through different management strategies.
3. To direct users to alternative times and coastal areas.
4. To make expectations more realistic
5. To use direct allocation to ensure that encounter levels are kept low.

## 5.3 Summary

A number of sites have been identified that have the potential for access to be improved. These sites are commonly accessible by vehicles to within 40 metres of the coast, but are held in private ownership. It is recommended that consideration be given to the formalisation of access in these areas through formalised voluntary easements or land acquisition.

A range of other options are available to improve recreation and access opportunities in the coastal environment and manage conflict between users. These include district plan mechanisms of reserves acquisition, and managing the effects of land use and subdivision; informational signs; walkways, provisions of asset management plans, and establishing regional parks.

Recreational Opportunities Spectrum and Land Use Capability Processes should be used to identify the needs of coastal users, direct conflicting activities to alternative areas, and identify alternative management approaches.

Management approaches that promote access to the coast should recognise the potential for conflict between a range of recreational activities.

A decision on managing conflict should consider whether there is a need to restrict access for particular coastal activities.

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<sup>10</sup> Refer for example (Cole et al. 1997)

The priority of giving access to the coastal marine area, over other types of access within the coastal environment, should be translated to the various plans and documents which govern asset management and resource use.

The Wairarapa Coastal Strategy should provide guidance on such issues as asset management, esplanade reserve policy, regional parks and coastal walkways. This guidance should include policies that address the rationalisation of low quality reserves (for example road reserves) and the purchase of land for key reserves where legal access is not available.



## **Chapter 6**

# **Conclusion**

This conclusion outlines some recommendations for the process of finalising the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy and outlines a series of recommendations to complete the process with regards to the issue of access and recreation. It should be considered in conjunction with the summaries for the preceding chapters.

There is currently a lack of information detailing the extent of recreation and access opportunities within the coastal environment. It is therefore recommended that a database be compiled of access networks, including tracks, encumbrances and marginal strips. This will enable strategies for providing access and recreation opportunities to be devised in accordance with the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy.

There is a range in the management approaches of the various district council's within the Wairarapa in the level and type of access that is provided to the coast. This creates potential cross boundary issues where access to the coast is either better provided, or less access is provided, in other districts. The implications of this are likely to be confirmed in the proposed coastal users survey.

In the 1970's and 1980's the Department of Lands and Survey undertook considerable research to identify lands that can be acquired for recreational purposes. It is likely that much of these values attributed to these areas have not changed, and many significant access and recreation areas have been identified. The consistency of this information with various Council policies and recreational expectations is therefore worth reviewing.

In order to identify demands and preferences for recreation and open space areas a coastal users survey is proposed. Findings of the survey should be incorporated into the final 'Access and Recreation' technical report.

There are a number of statutes that govern the provision of access and recreation within the coastal environment. Plans and strategies prepared under these statutes have the potential to facilitate a concerted, regionally focussed approach. The Wairarapa Coastal Strategy can provide the mandate to maintain and promote public access to CMS within the Wairarapa region in accordance with Part II of the RMA.

In so doing, the management approach of Wairarapa Coastal Strategy should recognise particular recreational preferences and constraints and provide reference to information databases detailing access and recreation related issues on a site by site basis.

In cases where access to the coast might be limited, or questions arise over the extent of access, there is a need to advise the public of what access exists on the ground, and to confirm the extent and location of this access. Where possible, methods should be employed to secure access where there is a demand and this access is not legally available.

Given the complexity of coastal environment and length of Wairarapa coastline, coupled with the relative lack of resources in monitoring and enforcing coastal issues, any management approach adopted as part of the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy should outline priorities for coastal management according to various areas. In so doing, however, it is necessary to ensure those areas which are the most remote, and allow the least amount of access, are not developed in such a way as to compromise those values which contribute to recreational experience and access, or invoke significant adverse effects.

Once the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy process is complete, it is essential to amend plans and strategies to be consistent with the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy.

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