

4 ISSUES, OBJECTIVES: Open Space & Access to Waterways

4.1 OVERVIEW OF OPEN SPACE AND ACCESS TO WATERWAYS

The enhancement of public access to and along the coast, lakes and rivers is a matter of national importance for which Council has responsibility. However riparian margins must be carefully managed to ensure that a range of environmental objectives are achieved. These include:

- The management of recreation opportunities.
- The enhancement of water quality that may be under threat from adjacent activities.
- The management of natural hazards particularly flooding.
- The protection of the habitats in the water and on the banks.
- The enhancement of public access.

Some of these responsibilities sit with the Manawatu Wanganui Regional Council which proposes to prepare a regional plan for activities in the beds of rivers, lakes and wetlands in the region and a General Regional Plan.

In 1995/6 the Council prepared a recreation strategy for the district. In this survey, and others, the need for improved access to rivers featured strongly. The districts coastline is open with long sandy beaches and ocean surf and attracts visitors to the holiday and retirement settlements along the coast.

The Manawatu River is a major waterway in the north of the District. The lower part of the river is extensively used for recreation activities and access to the river is well developed. The river mouth area has significant habitat values that justify protection although there is potential for improved public access.

The Tokomaru Stream is highly valued as a trout fishery and access to and along the stream is currently limited. The Opiki area is a high priority for improved access.

“Waterways were living entities in the sense that they were revered and respected. They had their guardians (taniwha) and the appropriate karakia and rituals always preceded any undertaking that involved it. The lower reaches of a creek, for example, would be designated for noa (common) activities, like bathing and swimming while the upper reaches and headwaters were preserved for tapu (sacred or spiritual) activities.”

Lake Horowhenua (Waipunahau), Lake Papataionga (Waiwiri) are the two most significant lakes in the district. Both have great significance to Tangata whenua and both are specifically managed for their environmental and cultural values. Enhancement of the lakes should be achieved through improved riparian management of the streams feeding the lakes.

The Ohau River and its tributaries are also highly valued for recreation including fishing. Recreation reserves of district significance are located at Kimberley and Gladstone Road. Access to the river is generally good except for at the mouth of the river.

4 ISSUES, OBJECTIVES: Open Space & Access to Waterways

The Waikawa Stream although small provides a link to the foothills of the Tararuas where there are areas of significant open space value.

4.2 SIGNIFICANT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES FOR OPEN SPACE AND ACCESS TO WATERWAYS

Issue 9. Access for the community to public open space, waterways and the coast, and the management of riparian margins in order to promote the sustainable management of water bodies.

OBJECTIVE 5:	Enhancement of public access to and along rivers, lakes and the coast at appropriate locations.
POLICY 5.1:	Maintain and enhance existing public access to the coast, rivers and lakes, and identify existing public access in a register available at the Council's Levin Office.
POLICY 5.2:	Secure additional public access to rivers and lakes only where: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the use of the riparian margin is necessary for access and can be achieved without compromising natural values;- the management of flooding and other natural hazards will not be adversely affected;- the access enhances existing or proposed public access networks;
POLICY 5.3:	Give priority to improving access to the Tokomaru Stream and Ohau River and tributaries;
POLICY 5.4:	Manage riparian areas in the water collection area of the Ohau River to give priority to the protection of water quality;
POLICY 5.5:	Require riparian buffer zones for land uses such as aggregate extraction adjacent to waterways;

Explanation and Principal Reasons

The objective and policies are intended to maintain and improve public access where needs have been identified, and to safeguard water quality.

METHODS FOR ISSUES 9 AND OBJECTIVE 5

District Plan

- (a) The creation of esplanade reserves and esplanade strips for the following purposes:
- (i) Maintaining or enhancing the natural functions 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 or esplanade strip; or
 - (v) Mitigating natural hazards; or

4 ISSUES, OBJECTIVES: Open Space & Access to Waterways

- (vi) Provision of linkages or ecological corridors to allow the effective movement or migration of species.
- (b) To enable public access to or along any sea, river or lade; 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.

Esplanade reserves not exceeding 20 metres in width may be taken where allotments of less than four (4) hectares in size are to be created adjacent to the coast, or adjacent to rivers and streams over three (3) metres in width. See Section 20.2.6.

Additional priority areas, other than those specified in Policy 5.3, will be identified in accord with the Natural Environment chapter, specifically in the creation of a reserve network through a Vision Plan. by way of Plan. Council will purchase esplanade reserves or strips independently of land subdivision, to facilitate implementation of recreation and conservation strategies. Methods will include acquisition by subdivision, Resource Consents and Annual Plan process.

Selection criteria will include:

The protection/enhancement of riparian vegetation which will:

- decrease water temperatures by shading, helping to improve habitat for aquatic plants and wildlife;
- serve as 'wildlife corridors' as the extent and benefit of 'retired' riparian margins accrue over time;
- improve water quality by trapping sediment and nutrient runoff;
- provide spawning areas for inanga;
- protect areas of remnant vegetation;
- control erosion.

Asset Management

- Negotiate with private landowners the possibilities for enhanced public access in accordance with policy priorities.
- Council will actively negotiate the establishment of fenced and planted esplanade strips adjacent to the Ohau River in the water collection area.
- Through The Annual Plan process, Council may consider the provision of additional pedestrian access and walkways for the benefit of both residents and visitors.

Provision of Information

- Council will publicize the location of existing access ways through signage.
- Council will also cooperate with regional initiatives to promote improved riparian management practices.

(Council considers that regulatory mechanisms are insufficient methods to secure appropriate access to Water Bodies and promote responsible riparian management. A range of methods are therefore proposed.)

4 ISSUES, OBJECTIVES: Open Space & Access to Waterways

4.3 ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

The outcomes for open space and access to public waterways which are anticipated to result from the combined implementation of the above policies and methods are as follows:

- Improved access to the coast, lakes, and rivers within the District
- In particular, improved access to the Tokomaru and Ohau Streams and it's tributaries.
- Improved water quality from the Ohau River as measures are put in place to better manage the competing uses of this river.