

## 5 ISSUES, OBJECTIVES: Coastal Environment

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### 5.1 OVERVIEW OF COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

The landscape of Horowhenua District is dominated to the east by the Tararua Ranges and a lowland strip leading to the west. The coastal lowland has been formed by shallow marine sediments overlain by sand dunes which extend inland along the whole coastal plain. The soils closest to the coastline are vulnerable to wind and water erosion particularly where they are exposed by the removal of surface vegetation. There are numerous areas of ecological significance including rivers, river mouths and estuaries, indigenous vegetation and coastal wetlands and lakes.

The coastal plains have a significant number of archaeological sites and sites of particular value to tangata whenua (waahi tapu) resulting from the historical pattern of settlement of the area. The landscape is distinctively coastal, being based on crescent dune formations in pasture or woodlots. There are also significant areas of exotic forestry extending along the coast while in the north are more fertile river terraces. The Department of Conservation has defined the area influenced by sand dune formations as the 'Foxton Ecological District'.

The Resource Management Act 1991 places special importance on the sustainable management of the coast. The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment, and its protection from inappropriate subdivision, use and development is a matter of national importance. A number of other resource management plans and policy statements are required to be prepared to address the sustainable management of the Horowhenua coast. These are:

The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) This is a national policy statement and provides guidance on how the Act's responsibilities should be met. It covers the whole of the coastal environment which includes the land influenced by the coast and coast processes and the coastal marine area (CMA). The CMA includes the foreshore, seabed, and coastal water, and the air space above the water, between the outer limit of the territorial sea, and the line of mean high water springs (MHWS).

The Manawatu Wanganui Regional Policy Statement (RPS) provides an overview of the resource management issues of the region including the coast and sets out policies and objectives that must be adhered to in district plans.

The RPS defines the coastal environment of the region as:

*"the environment in which the coast is a significant part, including the coastal marine area, all tidal waters and foreshore above and below mean high water springs, dunes, beaches, areas of coastal vegetation, areas subject to coastal erosion and flooding, salt marshes, sea cliffs and estuaries."*

The Regional Coastal Plan (RCP) applies to land, water and seabed below mean high water springs.

Management Plans Other methods include management plans established under the provisions of the Conservation Act 1987, the Reserves Act 1977, and the Wildlife Act 1953, Iwi Management Plans under the Resource Management Act 1991, archaeological sites protected under the provisions of the Historic Places Act, Council bylaws, etc. In formulating objectives, policies, and rules for the integrated management of the coastal area regard has been had to these alternative methods.

The area of dune and associated coastal vegetation extends substantially inland from the coast to a line running north-south just west of Levin. This area defines the Horowhenua coastal environment.

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### 5.2 SIGNIFICANT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES FOR THE COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

**Issue 10:** Preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment and protection of the coastal environment and all it encompasses from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.

**Issue 11:** Maintain the availability of the coast as a public resource.

The foredunes are particularly susceptible to 'blowouts' caused by the removal of vegetation and subsequent degradation by water and wind. Human activities such as "all terrain" vehicles and other recreational activities can have a destructive effect on the dunelands.

These dunes are also popular locations on which to build as they offer attractive building platforms with views of the coast. Policies, methods and rules will therefore manage development in the area immediately abutting the coastal margin in a manner which maintains the distinctive coastal landscape. The wider coastal environment will be identified as an area of significant intrinsic and ecological importance however no specific rules will be applied to the protection of this wider area.

<b>OBJECTIVE 6:</b>	<b>To avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse environmental effects of development and natural processes on coastal landscapes, habitats, and heritage features/values.</b>
<b>POLICY 6.1:</b>	<b>To confine urban development in the coastal environment to existing settlements with no expansion along the coastal margin.</b>
<b>POLICY 6.2:</b>	<b>To avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects of building and development on the coastal buffer area.</b>
<b>POLICY 6.3:</b>	<b>To identify and protect the outstanding coastal landscapes and natural features.</b>
<b>POLICY 6.4:</b>	<b>Protect the natural habitats of indigenous species within the coastal environment.</b>
<b>POLICY 6.5:</b>	<b>To ensure effluent disposal systems are sited and maintained in a manner which does not detract from the quality of the environment.</b>
<b>POLICY 6.6:</b>	<b>To ensure the protection of the coastal foredunes from erosion caused by inappropriate development, use or subdivision.</b>
<b>POLICY 6.7:</b>	<b>Preserve the natural character and intrinsic values of the coastal environment and protect the character and values from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.</b>
<b>POLICY 6.8:</b>	<b>To protect sites of archaeological and cultural significance where they may be under pressure from natural processes or human development.</b>
<b>POLICY 6.9:</b>	<b>Where appropriate, ensure priority is given to restore and rehabilitate the natural character of the coastal environment.</b>

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### **Explanation and Principal Reasons**

*The soils in the coastal environment are susceptible to wind and water erosion especially immediately adjacent to the coast and where the vegetation has been removed.*

*It is important to ensure that development, including farming or earthworks and urban development, has regard to the physical constraints imposed by the coastal environment. The objective and policies identify the significant environmental matters that will be addressed in the methods.*

*The Coastal Buffer Area, which immediately abuts the coastal margin, has been accorded special protection in the Plan policies and rules due to its susceptibility to erosion and the importance of retaining public access to the coast.*

**Issue 10: Preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment and protection of the coastal environment and all it encompasses from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.**

### **METHODS FOR ISSUE 10 AND OBJECTIVE 6**

#### **District Plan**

- A coastal buffer area which includes the immediate coastal foredunes and lakes has been defined. This encompasses the most sensitive coastal areas and rules will be used to apply strict control of activities and development in this area. Buildings, structures and the subdivision of land requires a full discretionary resource consent.
- No specific rules will apply to the wider coastal environment, and the Rural Zone provisions will apply to this area. However in assessing the merits of a proposal requiring a resource consent, the issues, objectives, policies and methods contained in this section of the Plan will also apply.
- The Plan identifies outstanding landscapes and natural features, which, due to their contribution to the character and quality of the coastal environment and the district as a whole, require protection through rules in the Plan.

#### **Other Statutory Plans**

The Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council administers the following regional plans:

- (i) Proposed Regional Coastal Plan;
- (ii) Transitional Regional Coastal Plan;
- (iii) Proposed Regional Air Quality Plan; and
- (iv) Proposed Manawatu Catchment Water Quality Regional Plan;

The Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council will also be producing the following additional documents:

- (i) The Beds of Lakes and Rivers Regional Plan;
- (ii) The Lake Horowhenua (Waipunahau) and Hokio Stream Catchment Strategy;
- (iii) A Land Management Plan;

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These Plans together with the District Plan provisions provide for the management of the coastal environment.

### Annual Plan

- The Council will through the annual plan process, continue to allocate funds to construct or upgrade existing public services such as roading, and sewerage reticulation.
- The acquisition of reserves (e.g. esplanade reserves, local purpose reserves etc) and associated reserve management plans, will continue to be used to protect and enhance the coastal environment.

### Other Statutory Mechanisms

- Regional Plans, the Historic Places Act, the Reserves Act and the Conservation Act etc are other mechanisms for achieving protection of specific features, areas and landscapes.
- The Building Act requires that minimum environmental standards are met where new development occurs; in particular, where development requires effluent disposal systems, and water collection and disposal systems etc.

### Education and Information

- Council will work with the Regional Council and the Department of Conservation, environmental and community groups, and landowners, where appropriate, to encourage sustainable land use practices in the coastal environment, and the district as a whole.
- Council will produce development guidelines to persons involved in land use development in the coastal environment. These guidelines will provide 'good practice' advice on how to minimise the environmental effects of development involving the siting of buildings, earthworks, road building and the planting of shelterbelts and other development.
- Council will encourage the development of landcare programmes in conjunction with other organisations.

*[Rules are an effective method of ensuring that the scale and character of development is designed in a manner which has regard to the objectives and policies of the Plan. It is also recognised that there are a range of other statutory and non-statutory methods which can be used to encourage the sustainable management of the coast.]*

<b>Issue 11: Maintain the availability of the coast as a public resource.</b>
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The coast is an important recreation resource for the District and the people of New Zealand, which should be available for use by the public. This principle is embodied in the Resource Management Act 1991 as a matter of national importance, and has been recognised through the release of the first national policy statement, the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement. Certain activities may prevent the use and enjoyment of the coast by the public. It is important therefore that Council actively manage activities in the area immediately abutting the coastal margin, and to promote activities which both enhance the amenity of the coast, and result in improved access.

While providing for public access to, and along the coast, it is important to recognise that there may be circumstances where such access needs to be restricted to provide for the needs of alternative

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legislation. For example, the Defence Act 1990 enables access to defence areas, including areas used for temporary military training activities, to be restricted.

<b>OBJECTIVE 7:</b>	<b>To enhance public access to, and along the coast, in appropriate locations.</b>
<b>POLICY 7.1:</b>	<b>To promote, where appropriate, development in the coastal environment which allows for improved access to the coast through:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the creation of esplanade reserves, esplanade strips and access strips;</li><li>- providing roading and pedestrian access associated with development;</li><li>- developing, improving and maintaining existing forms of access to the coast;</li><li>- providing public amenities which encourage and allow for the use and enjoyment of the coast.</li></ul>
<b>POLICY 7.2:</b>	<b>To ensure that private development does not preclude the use of the coast by the general public.</b>
<b>POLICY 7.3:</b>	<b>To ensure that the adverse effects arising from the provision of public access be avoided, remedied or mitigated.</b>
<b>POLICY 7.4:</b>	<b>Where possible, ensure there is no disturbance to foredunes and the adjacent coastal marine area at public access points.</b>

### METHODS FOR ISSUE 11 AND OBJECTIVE 7

#### District Plan

- All levels of development within the coastal buffer area will require a resource consent. This will allow for the assessment of the merits of applications with respect to access to and along the coast.

#### Annual Plan

- In addition to setting aside funds for the purchase of reserves, the Council may provide public amenities such as toilets, street furniture and other amenities to encourage the use and enjoyment of the coast.

#### Education and Information

- Council will work with the Regional Council and the Department of Conservation, environmental and community groups, and landowners, where appropriate, to encourage sustainable land use practices in the coastal environment, and the district as a whole.
- Council will produce development guidelines to persons involved in land use development in the coastal environment. These guidelines will provide 'good practice' advice on how to minimise the environmental effects of development involving the siting of buildings, earthworks, road building and the planting of shelterbelts and other development.

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- Council will encourage the development of landcare programmes in conjunction with other organisations.

### **5.3 ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS**

The outcomes which are anticipated to result from the combined implementation of the above policies and methods are as follows:

- The protection of the coastal foredunes and coastal features immediately adjacent to the coastal margin from inappropriate landuse practices.
- The retention of the natural character of the coastal environment;
- The avoidance, remediation or mitigation of any adverse environmental effects caused by development in the coastal environment.
- The protection and enhancement of historical and cultural values, including Tangata whenua spiritual values (taonga raranga) associated with the coast.
- An improvement in land use management practices over time resulting in a reduction in the level of coastal erosion caused by sand dune blow-outs.
- Improved access and provision of public amenities at key locations along the coast.
- The protection and enhancement of outstanding coastal landscapes, natural features and areas of natural habitat.