

1.5 General Physical Character of the Coastal Reserves

1.5.1 Climate

The Eastern Bay of Plenty has a subtropical, temperate, marine climate, with warm, humid summers and mild winters. The region is one of the warmest in New Zealand with most areas experiencing at least 2,000 hours of sunshine per annum. The average daily temperatures range from 9 to 16°C in winter and 22 to 26°C in the summer. The majority of the rainfall occurs during the winter and spring with the region receiving an annual rainfall of between 2000mm and 4000 mm.

1.5.2 Geology and Geomorphology

The geology of the District comprises a thick rhyolitic tephra layer where the upper layers form the parent materials of some soils. The tephra is derived from a number of sources including Mount Tarawera eruption and the Lake Taupo eruption where pumice deposition was widespread. Alluvium derived from greywacke and tephra is found in the floodplains of the Waioeka, Otara, Waiotahe and Waiaua Rivers.

Specific geology around the coastal reserves is Mid Pleistocene Sediments and Holocene Sediments, whilst the composition of soils range from Brown Semiarid and Recent Firm, Fibric Fill Fluv Soils and windblown dune sands (described by Landcare NZ and Geology data sourced from BOPRC). The Geology and Soils Plans are attached as Appendix 3.

1.5.3 Coast Care and Dune Protection

The coastal environment is frequently subject to illegal use of vehicles, unrestricted pedestrian access, grazing and pest animals (rabbits) which all have negative effects on the stability of the dune environment. It is for this reason that a coast care and dune protection programme has been established.

Environment Bay of Plenty established the coastal monitoring system as part of a Natural Regional Monitoring Programme for the collection of varied environmental data and in accordance with Part IV Section 35 (1&2) of the Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991. The programme includes the annual monitoring of the dunes at 53 sites along a 135 km stretch of Bay of Plenty coastline extending from Waihi Beach in the west to Hukuwai Beach in the east. The monitoring programme applicable to the Ōpōtiki Coastal Reserves is the Hukuwai Beach System which extends from the Ōhiwa Spit to Opape Beach.

Monitoring sites relevant to this Plan are:

- CCS03 Tirohanga Steam West, CCS004 Hukuwai West,
- CCS05 Waiotahe Beach East, CCS06 Waiwhakatoitōi,
- CCS 007 Waiotahe Spit,
- CCS008 Ōhiwa Spit.

Monitoring over the past 20 years has indicated evidence of accretion at the Ōhiwa Spit, Waiotaha Spit and Waiwhakatoitoi and evidence of erosion at Waiotaha Beach, Hukuwai West and Tirohanga Stream West. The full report may be viewed on <http://www.envbop.govt.nz/Environment/Coastal-Monitoring.aspx>.

Vegetation of coastal sand dunes is of fundamental importance for dune stability as the vegetation mitigates the effects of sea and wind erosion by binding the loose non-cohesive sands. The illegal use of vehicles, unrestricted pedestrian access, grazing and pest animals (rabbits) all have negative effects on the stability and sustainability of the dune environment.

1.5.4 Fauna and Flora

The coastal reserves support a number of important flora and fauna habitats. The natural character and ecological value of these 160 kilometres of coastline is enhanced by nationally significant sections of Pohutukawa Coastal Forest and the estuarine habitats of the Ōhiwa Harbour and Waiotaha Estuary which support a diverse range of avifauna, fish and other fauna.

A full assessment of flora and fauna found at each coastal reserve is detailed in the Draft Coastal Reserves Management Plan prepared by Wildlands Consultants Ltd – December 2006.

1.6 Reserve Use

1.6.1 Recreation

The Ōpōtiki Coast provides excellent recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors to the District in the form of beach and coastal recreational opportunities activities such as swimming, boating, fishing, surfing and other small water craft activities, walking and tramping, bird watching, camping and nature and scientific studies.

The recreational opportunities form part of a larger spectrum of recreational activities available in the District and the wider Eastern Bay of Plenty. Levels of high intensities of recreation activity are experienced due to the following factors.

- The reserves are easily accessible to the local population of 9530 and a further 33,000 people who live within a one hour drive of the District.
- The reserves are accessible from SH 2 and SH 35 or access roads leading from the state highways. Large volumes of traffic use these state highways to access the Whakatane District in the west and Gisborne in the south east via the coastal road.
- Provision of facilities such as car parks, public conveniences, showers, picnic facilities, boat ramps and access to beaches and walking tracks all enhance and compliment the recreational values of the reserves.
- Reserves located along the coastline enable the public to enjoy free and unrestricted (pedestrian) access to the beaches and the sea.

1.6.2 Lease Land for Paid Camping and Overnight Motor Homes

The ODC grant a concession to operate commercial camping and parking of motor homes at the Ōhiwa Holiday Park:

- Ōhiwa Holiday Park. The holiday park is located at the end of Ōhiwa Harbour Road at the Ōhiwa Spit Reserve. The location is popular in that it provides visitors with easy access to the Ōhiwa Harbour and the beach and walking tracks through pristine coastal forests located along the escarpment.

The land occupied by the Ōhiwa Holiday Park is owned by the ODC and is designated as Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977. The term of the lease is a 33 year lease. The lease commenced in February 1992 and expires in January 2022. The holiday park is a very popular summer holiday destination for visitors frequenting the District. The holiday park provides 170 camp sites (powered and non-powered), cabins, quality ablution and kitchen facilities and recreational facilities. The annual number of people who stay at the park is 35,000 bed nights (2009).

- In addition, a similar concession exists at the Ōpōtiki Holiday Park (not covered in the CRMP).

1.6.3 Freedom Camping

The ODC provides for freedom camping and overnight parking of motor homes at the Hoani Waititi Reserve:

- Hoani Waititi Reserve – Omaio Beach. This camping ground is located to the west of the Omaio settlement and provides camping grounds with limited facilities. The camping ground provides informal camping sites and is a popular overnight location for self contained motor homes. Public conveniences are located on Omaio Beach approximately 680 metres from the camping ground.

1.6.4 Provision of the Freedom Camping Act 2011

In response to provision of the Freedom Camping Act, Council will undertake consultation for the development of protocols to permit camping on selected reserves in alignment with Freedom Camping legislation.

