

## **Towards a Community Collective Commitment (CCC).**

### **To Protect Key Values / Unique Characteristics of the Opoutere Beach Recreation Reserve.**

#### **You are invited to a professionally facilitated community meeting**

11 January 2020, from 10am to 3pm

Opoutere School Hall.

BYO lunch. Families welcome. Tea/coffee provided.

#### **Why this meeting is being held**

The Department of Conservation (DOC) wants the community's views on the future of the Opoutere beach reserve, which it manages.

- In the Opoutere / Ohui community, there are different and sometimes conflicting points of view and concerns about activities and attributes that characterise the beach reserve, including;
  - Felled pine trees
  - Poisoned pine trees
  - Hazards - fire risk, falling limbs
  - Animal and weed pest control
  - Commercial events
  - Outstanding natural features and landscape
  - Protected areas and restrictions
  - Popular recreation area for walking, biking and relaxing
  - Pathways to the beach and bird sanctuary
- In particular, there is community concern that poisoned and ageing pines (now a major health and safety hazard) should be managed in such a way to not threaten the unique characteristics of the beach reserve.
- There has already been much discussion between DOC, Opoutere Ratepayers and Residents Association (ORRA), the Wharekawa Catchment Care Group (WCCG), independent members of the Opoutere / Ohui community and Fire and Emergency NZ (FENZ).
- A public facilitated meeting for the community is seen as the best next step forward.

#### **This is what the meeting aims to achieve**

Through professional facilitation by Haua Partnership, the aims are:

- to identify key values to be protected and a vision that the community collectively can commit to for the beach reserve.
- to identify and acknowledge challenges, for example:
  - hazard management arising from aged and poisoned trees – fire risk, falling limbs
  - weed management
  - predator control
  - commercial gathering / events
  - coastal erosion
  - raise public awareness that key values / characteristics are being managed and protected

These will evolve into a Community Collective Commitment (CCC), to guide those managing the beach reserve for the future. We do not know yet what form the CCC document will take.

- The meeting gives an opportunity for those who come along to share their opinions, values and visions for the beach reserve.
- DOC will not attend the meeting. However, their sponsorship of Haua Partnership is appreciated.

- Iwi have signalled to DOC that they will engage after the CCC is agreed. Ownership of the beach reserve is subject to Treaty Settlement.

## To get the ball rolling

Through those earlier discussions and to get the ball rolling, a tentative list of values and unique characteristics for the beach reserve has been drafted. This was circulated in similar form in earlier community notices. It's expected and encouraged that changes, additions and rejections will come from the meeting.

The list is in no particular order, priority or importance. Numbers are for easy reference only. Characteristics listed under each value heading are for information.

### 1. Amenity / Recreation values

- The length and width of the beach reserve is unique in itself, creating a sense of old, isolation, remoteness and continuity
- Popular for walking, biking, relaxing, access to fishing, swimming, surfing, and the like

### 2. Waahi tapu sites (burials / urupa)

- 21 acres set aside in 1886
- Non-recorded but locally known burial grounds
- Whale burial ground

### 3. Archaeological sites

- rock cave
- midden
- 12 recorded sites – likely to be more that are unrecorded for the moment

### 4. Historical / Heritage values

- Pre-1900 European settler sites
- Rafting house, bakery, general store, post office (in the beach reserve? - TBC)

### 5. Avian values

- Wharekawa Harbour Wildlife Refuge. Gazetted under the Wildlife Act
- The Opoutere sandspit and Wharekawa Harbour is a "Priority One" site for coastal birds. Very high avian values noted for 9 species (including Dotterel, Variable oystercatcher, Bar-tailed godwit) classified as threatened, endangered, vulnerable or at risk (JE Dowding).
- Adjacent wetland habitat of Banded rail and Australasian bittern
- Pine forest and regenerating native bush habitat of North Island Kaka

### 6. Ecological / Landscape values

- Coastal sand dunes: largely unmodified
  - Dune flora: spinifex, pingea, and golden sand sedge
  - Dune flora: dune snail, moko skink, native butterflies
- Exotic pine forest
  - protects sand dunes from wind / rain erosion
  - protects native regenerating coastal bush
  - screens visibility from the beach of neighbouring housing
- Adjacent to recognised significant wetlands
  - mangroves, sea rush, oioi, sea meadow and saltmarsh
- Adjacent to Wharekawa Harbour and estuarine vegetation
  - sea grass, eel grass, shellfish beds, food source for birds and aquatic life
- Classified as an Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape (ONFL) by Waikato Regional Council.
  - "An expansive, undeveloped, ocean beach, and dune system, backed by a forested Department of Conservation Reserve, comprised primarily of maritime pine and regenerating native vegetation.

Ohui, its northern end, is marked by the striking Ohui Bluffs, Ohui Stream and Motohaua Rock. Its southern end culminates in a distal spit and the mouth of the Wharekawa Harbour, off shore from which sits the sculptural Hikinui Island and, on the southern side of which is, Ruahiwihiwi Headland. Opoutere Beach is important from a recreational standpoint – for swimming, walking, surfing and the like. The beach, particularly the northern (Ohui) and southern (distal spit) ends of it, and the Wharekawa Harbour, are also very important ecologically as a habitat for NZ dotterel, the variable oystercatcher and other indigenous fauna and flora.”

## Have your say

Come along to the meeting. It's important to have your opinions heard.