

# APPENDIX 20

## SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREAS



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## 20.1 Introduction

Natural character is a complex integration and interrelation of a range of qualities and features that have been created by nature as distinct from those constructed by people. The qualities that make up natural character may be ecological, physical, spiritual, cultural or aesthetic in nature and include modified and managed environments.

The Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki (1997) identifies areas within the COASTAL MARINE AREA that are of value for natural character, ecological, landscape, social or cultural reasons and recognises the need for integrated management within the coastal environment to protect these features.

The areas identified within the Regional Coastal Plan are predominantly RIVER mouths and estuarine environments. RIVER mouths and their associated estuarine areas are very important places, serving as breeding areas for species that hold key positions in many oceanic food chains and marine ecosystems. Taranaki Regional Council is responsible for controlling the effects of activities below the Mean High Water Springs mark.

However, it is important to recognise the importance of the land-water interface. The values of these areas can be affected not only by activities within the RIVER mouths, but also by activities that occur upstream, and on the land adjoining. Therefore, to complement the Regional Coastal Plan, SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREAS have been identified within New Plymouth District. These are areas where the natural character constitutes an important component of the sustainable management of the coastal environment, and it is around these areas that efforts at restoration and rehabilitation will be focussed.

One of the most successful ways to protect such waterways is through riparian management. Riparian margins work to protect riverbanks from erosion (fine silts from eroding riverbanks are a common source of pollution) and, with the addition of fencing on farmlands, can exclude stock that can cause significant damage. Riparian vegetation and the re-establishment of marginal salt marsh communities can provide spawning areas, shelter and habitat enhancement for native freshwater fish and native and migratory bird species. They also add to the aesthetic and landscape values, can provide important cultural materials, and assist in the protection of cultural, spiritual or historical values. Good riparian management can therefore significantly improve the natural character of such areas. Taranaki

Regional Council advocates for and promotes the retention and planting of riparian vegetation through a variety of mechanisms, including conditions on resource consents and voluntary agreements. New Plymouth District Council can also promote riparian management.

A qualitative study has been undertaken to identify the values of these areas and to identify options for their management. These management options are not rules – that is, they have been identified as useful mechanisms for the restoration or enhancement of natural character but there is no requirement for landowners or land users to implement them. The focus for these areas is on the provision of information, education and incentives as experience has shown that voluntary and incentive approaches, by involving the landowner or community willingly, promote an ethic of stewardship and therefore often achieve better results than a purely regulatory approach. It is also important to recognise that these areas are homes, livelihoods and often have high recreational usage.

It is also important to recognise that the areas identified as SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREAS are only one part of an integrated system and that the catchment as a whole must be properly managed for the best results to be achieved.

## 20.2 Selection of SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREAS

SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREAS are based on those areas identified as Coastal Management A and B Areas within the Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki (1997), as follows:

- 1 Mohakatino River mouth.
- 2 Tongaporutu River mouth.
- 3 Mimi River mouth.
- 4 Urenui River mouth.
- 5 Onaero River mouth.
- 6 Waitara River mouth.
- 7 Waiongana Stream mouth.
- 8 Waiwhakaiho River mouth.
- 9 Sugar Loaf Islands (Nga Motu).
- 10 Oakura River mouth.

## 20.3 Mohakatino River mouth (site 1)

### Description

The Mohakatino River mouth is the most northern estuary in New Plymouth District. Much of the estuary to the west of State Highway 3 (SH3) still exists in its original state and it is one of the least modified in Taranaki (DoC, 1991). It has extensive inter-tidal mud and sand flats with a large wetland on the northern bank. This wetland is rated as nationally significant in the Wetlands of Ecological and Representative importance (DoC, 1985), while the Geopreservation Inventory has recorded this estuary as an interesting estuarine swamp of regional significance (DoC, 1991). The whole area has been recognised as having significant conservation values, providing habitat and food sources for a large number of coastal birds and fish, including nationally threatened bird species. It has also been recognised as having significant landscape values.

The wetland backs onto a strip of coastal forest (karaka/kawakawa) on fairly steep hillside around the RIVER bowl to the north, which terminates at SH3 to the west, at the top of the hillside and a few hundred metres before the open coast. This small area of forest contains the Tainui tree, which is thought to have arrived as a seedling in the Tainui canoe found in the wetland (DoC, 1991), and therefore has significant cultural and ecological value. This side of the Mohakatino estuary is owned and managed by DoC (the Mohakatino Beach Conservation Area) and is well fenced and protected from grazing animals.

The south side of the RIVER west of SH3 is mainly steep cliff face, covered with small patches of remnant bush on the face and grazing pasture along the top edge. Much of this cliff face is bare and shows signs of slow and steady erosion. Beside SH3, where the cliffs decrease in height are two baches surrounded by a mix of native and exotic vegetation and a large grassed area running down to the RIVER'S edge.

Landward of SH3, the RIVER margins have often been modified. The land on the north side of the RIVER is kept in pasture for grazing animals, with sparse natural vegetation (flax, raupo and sedge) on the margin that is not protected from stock. The riverbank is eroding, and is in a fairly degraded state from the road bridge to the bend in the RIVER 800m to the southeast.

On the south side of the RIVER there is a riparian strip, up to 20m wide, of cabbage TREES, manuka, TREE ferns, flax and sedge. This is replaced by macrocarpa 800m to the east of the ROAD bridge at the bend in the RIVER, and to the west by a small group of baches on a small man-made peninsula that juts out into the RIVER. The edges of this peninsula are mostly well vegetated and stable to the east; however, the riverbank to the west is protected by car tyre and corrugated iron retaining walls.

The causeways for SH3 are armoured with rock and concrete rubble at the inter-tidal level, above which are grass and gorse bank to the side of the ROAD. This area presents the greatest visual impact on the natural character of the area.

### Boundaries of the SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA

The boundary of the Mohakatino River mouth SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREA should extend from the sea to the last area of mudflats approximately 1.5km along the RIVER (Figure 20.1). To the west of SH3, the northern ridge of the RIVER bowl from the coast to SH3 marks this boundary. This area is fenced off and managed by DoC. To the south, the boundary should run 5-10m back from the cliff edge and down along the riverbank in front of the baches.

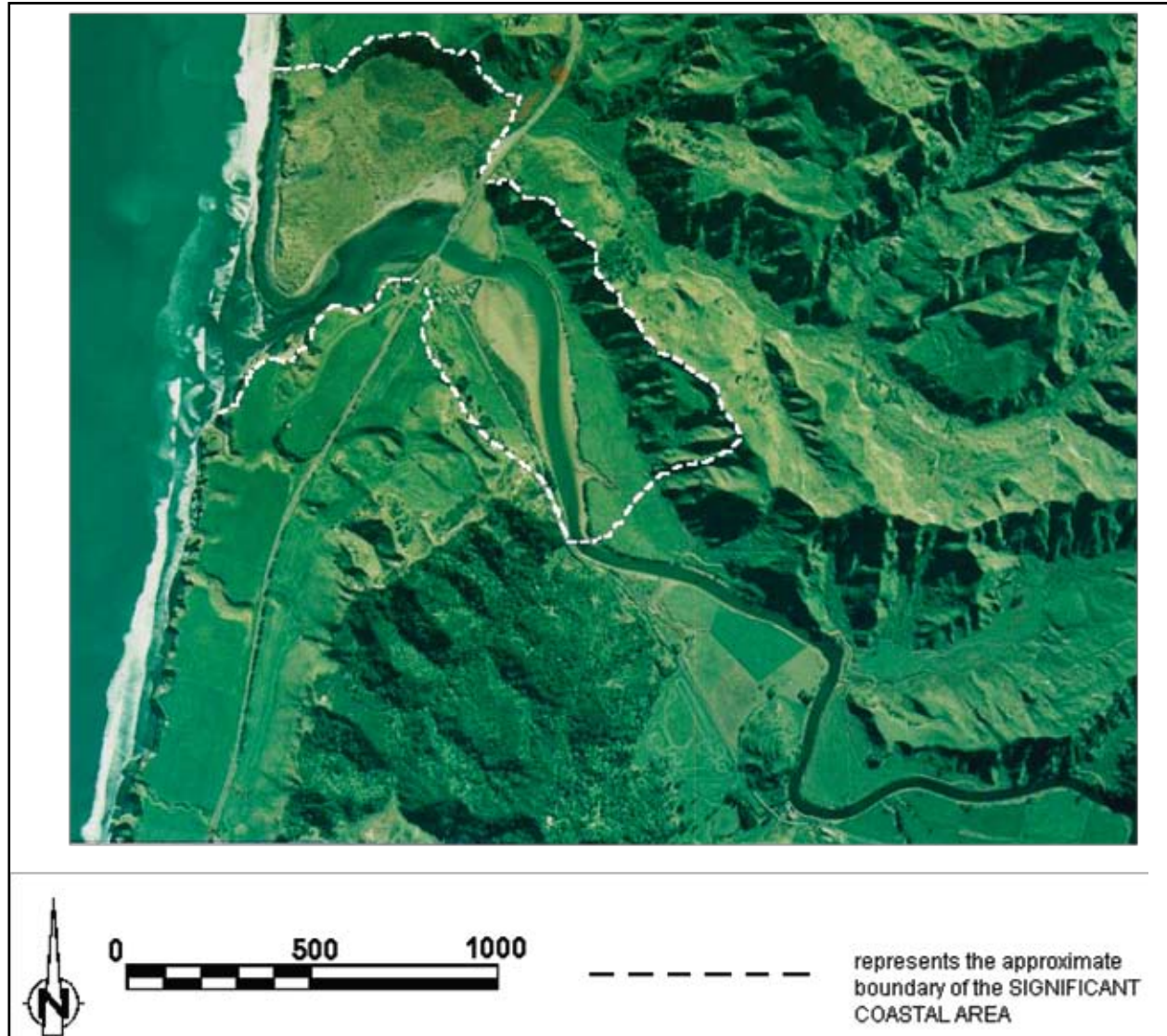
On the eastern side of SH3 the northern and southern boundaries should also be along the top of the sub-catchment ridge and should incorporate the area of baches beside SH3.

### Management options

- Eradication of all exotics on the causeway and replanting with appropriate plant species (flax, raupo). Plants in this area should be of types that do not grow high so that the view of the estuary is not obstructed from the ROAD.
- Advocate for the replacement of causeway armour with natural material (boulders) and planting.
- Fencing on the north side of the RIVER, landward of SH3 to protect the riverbanks from stock and planting of appropriate riparian species (flax, cabbage TREES, sedge).
- Maintenance of the existing riparian strip on the south side of the RIVER, landward of SH3.

- Encourage bach and landowners to plant estuarine/coastal native plants on their properties, especially along the RIVER margins.
- Fencing of the tops of the southern cliffs to exclude stock and planting of coastal forest natives similar to those already existing on the cliffs to decrease the potential for erosion and slips.

**Figure 20.1 Mohakatino River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA**



## 20.4 Tongaporutu River mouth (site 2)

### Description

The Tongaporutu River mouth is somewhat similar to the Mohakatino River mouth in that it is relatively unmodified near the entrance to the sea, has a wide lagoon just inside the entrance and has large areas of mud and sand flats. This whole area and the adjacent wetlands and marginal salt marsh provide habitat and food sources for a large number of coastal birds and fish species, spawning areas for native freshwater fish, and roosting areas for a number of migratory and wading bird species (DoC, 1991, 1995). The Geopreservation Inventory has recorded the coast at Tongaporutu as an area of national importance due to the fossils of the Miocene Epoch that are present (DoC, 1991). It has also been recognised as having significant landscape values.

To the west of SH3, the fairly steep northern riverbank is covered by native hardwood and broadleaf coastal forest (beech, karaka, rewarewa, puriri, TREE fern), and the ROAD which runs along the northern bank is barely visible. Much of this northern side is reserve land - the Umukaha Recreation Reserve on the coast and the Pou Tehia Historic Reserve (Pa site) between the RIVER and SH3. Along the top of the steep bushed area between the coast and SH3 are approximately one dozen large pine TREES that are very conspicuous along the skyline.

The south side of Tongaporutu River (that is, the true left bank), west of SH3 is a high cliff covered with native vegetation (planted for soil control and shelter purposes) in the less steep areas and showing exposed clay and rock elsewhere. This area of cliff extends from the sea to half way back towards SH3 where an area of flat land adjoins the RIVER (Tongaporutu Recreation Reserve). Tongaporutu Domain has a grassed area with picnic benches set aside for public use. There are small patches of wild ginger, gorse and wattle TREES around the edge of the western area and some planting has been undertaken closer to the riverbanks (flax and pohutukawa). The public area at the other end of the domain is occupied by several large pohutukawa. The baches, which lease some of the reserve area, are planted with a mixture of natives and exotics, and are often armoured with concrete walls along the RIVER to protect from erosion. There are also protection works associated with the pipeline easement and rock groynes near the western end of the domain. New Plymouth District Council, on behalf of the

Minister of Conservation, administers the reserve under a management plan (April 1990).

East of SH3 the coastal forest continues along the northern riverbank to a sharp southerly bend in the RIVER. Past this bend in the Tongaporutu River the land is kept in pasture and is in private ownership. There are fairly wide mud flats in this region, and some sparse vegetation (sedge) on the often eroded bank.

On the southern riverbank, east of SH3, are more private baches and homes planted with a mixture of mostly natives and some exotic TREES and plants in the gardens. The riverbank in this area is fronted by mudflats with some vegetation around the edge of the riverbank, which is vested as esplanade reserve. This area is also managed by New Plymouth District Council.

The causeways for SH3 are armoured with rock and concrete rubble at the intertidal level, above which are grass and gorse bank to the side of the ROAD. This presents the greatest visual impact on the natural character of the area.

### Boundaries of the SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA

The boundary of the Tongaporutu River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA should extend from the sea to the last significant area of mudflats approximately 2km along the RIVER. To the west of SH3, the northern ridge of the side of the RIVER and catchment from the coast to SH3 marks the boundary (Figure 20.2). This boundary runs partly through coastal forest that is reserve land. To the south, the boundary should run 5-10m back from the cliff edge from the sea and then widen to include the remnant forest next to Tongaporutu Domain and run along the riverside edge of the ROAD behind the domain and baches. This boundary should continue on the RIVER side of SH3 to the end of the SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA, just where the ROAD becomes close to the RIVER.

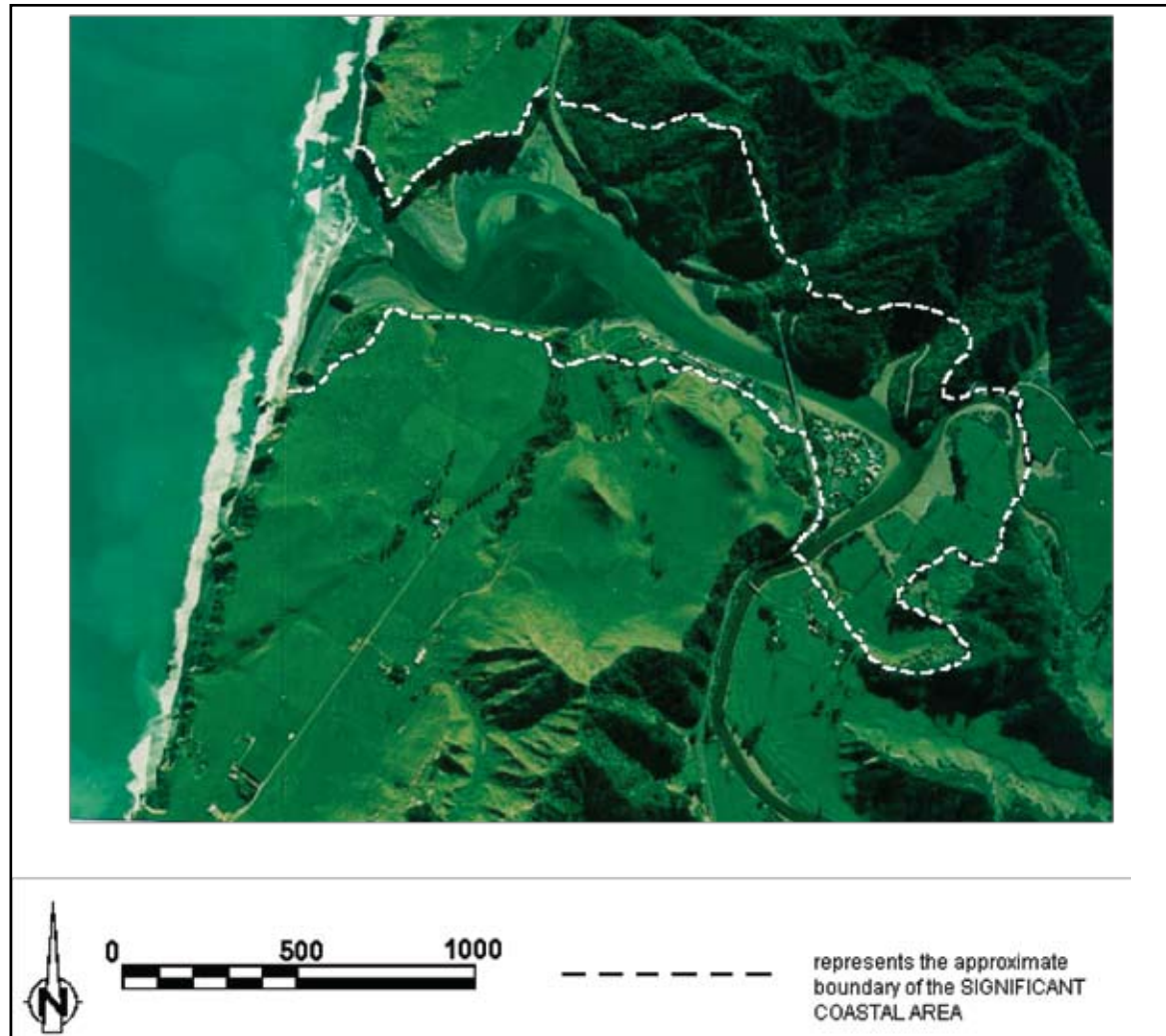
On the opposite of the RIVER, east of SH3, the boundary should be along the ridge of the sub-catchment hills around the pocket of mudflats below the pasture land and then extend to the ridge of the catchment that is covered by coastal forest. This forest land is also reserve.

### Management options

- Fencing of the boundary above the cliffs and caves on the southern bank of the RIVER, seaward of SH3 and planting of similar natives to those already established to decrease the potential for erosion and slips.

- Removal of exotic and pest species from the grassed areas at each end of the baches, and planting of riparian and other native vegetation.
- Provision of better vehicular access to the domain, seating, rubbish bins and other facilities to enable better utilisation by the public.
- Encourage bach owners to enhance the natural character through planting, especially riparian vegetation and native coastal species.
- Fencing of the northern bank of the RIVER, landward of SH3 to protect the riverbanks from stock and planting of appropriate species (flax, cabbage TREES, sedge etc).

**Figure 20.2 Tongaporutu River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA**



## 20.5 Mimi River mouth (site 3)

### Description

The Mimi River mouth is characterised by mud/sand flat, salt rush, reed swamp and sand dune habitat, all of which are uncommon in Taranaki (DoC, 1991). The RIVER flats in this area have been extensively modified, what was once a large swamp area is now mostly reclaimed pasture although some pockets of swamp do still remain. The area is recognised as having significant conservation value due to its extensive sand spit, tidal mud flats, salt marsh and sand dune habitats. A range of migratory and wading birds use this area and whitebait spawning occurs in the upper reaches (DoC, 1995). It has also been recognised for its landscape values. The area incorporates two Pa sites, one to the south of the RIVER flats and one looking down across the estuary to the sea.

The RIVER winds through a large area of flats near the entrance and then north parallel to the coast behind a sand spit, before emptying into the sea. Tall sand dunes covered by spinifex and sedge occupy the spit between the RIVER and the sea.

To the south of the RIVER bowl the steep bank of the Pa is covered in remnant bush which has gradually been shrinking in size as grazing stock encroach further into it. Opposite the Pa on the northern side of the RIVER bowl, the hillside is covered mostly with gorse with a large area of reclaimed swamp used for pasture although some flax and sedge is visible on the RIVER margin. Further upstream the north bank becomes very steep and is covered with remnant lowland bush.

On the opposite bank the RIVER flats have been reclaimed as pasture land. However, this side of the stream has been planted with natives (*Oleria*, flax, pohutukawa) and fenced off by the current owners all the way to the Pa site on the southern head. They have also fenced the significant area of wetland in this area and planted around its margins. DoC and the Iwi of the south head Pa site have planted this area near the coast with flax and pingao.

Above this wetland is the second Pa, this has also been planted out and fenced (*puriri*, *karo*, *oleria*, pohutukawa, flax), as has the hillside on the opposite side of the wetland. The current owners of the southern side of Mimi River are very keen to support any efforts to enhance the natural character of this area.

### Boundaries of the SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA

The boundary of the Mimi River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA should extend from the sea to 300m past the wetland on the south side of the RIVER, approximately 1.3km along the RIVER (Figure 20.3). The northern boundary should be the ridge of the riverbank from the coast to the up RIVER boundary.

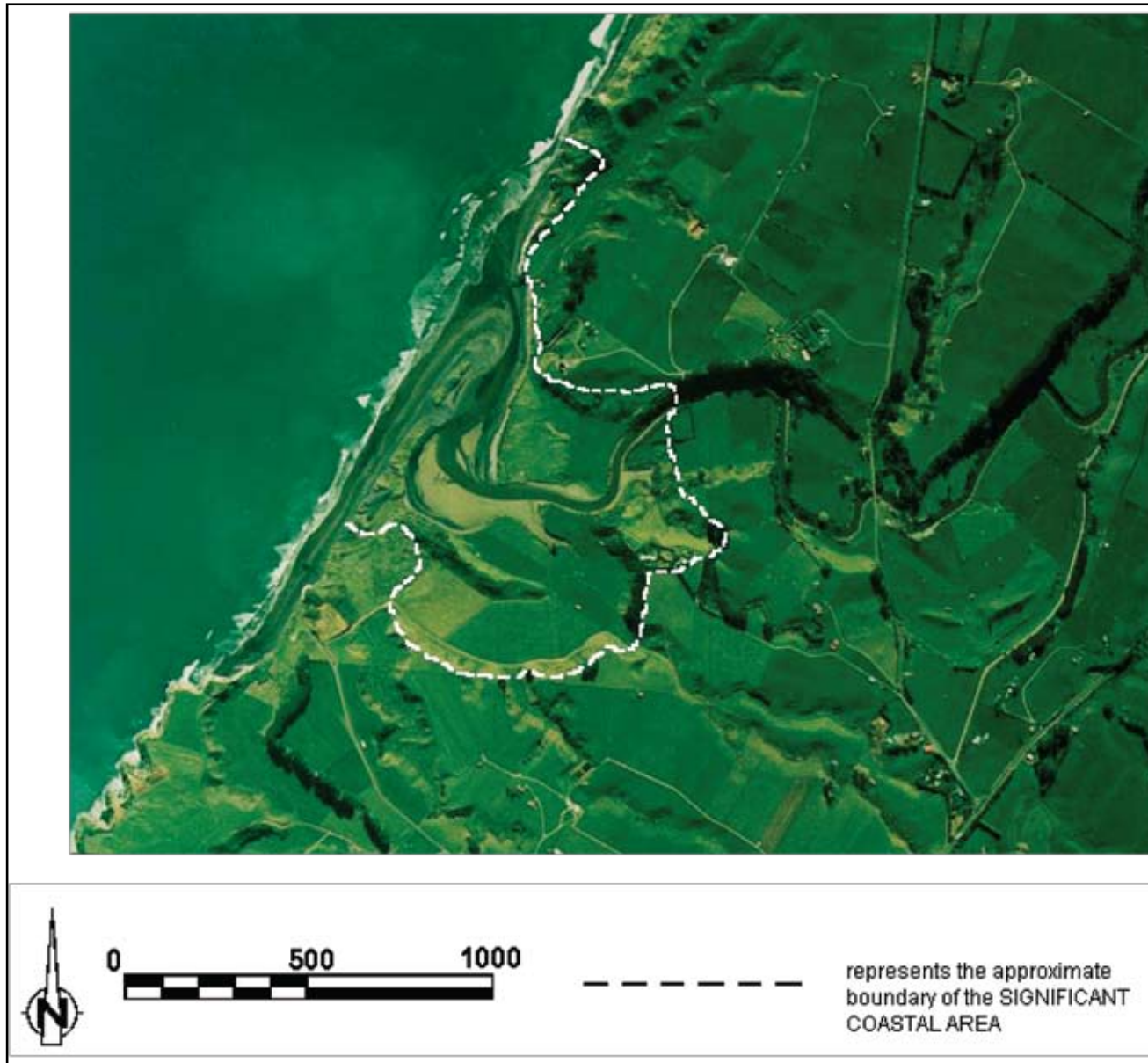
To the south the boundary should incorporate the sand spit and run along the top of the south head and around the reclaimed swamp flats and along the top of the ridge. It should also include the wetland and the riverbank along to the up stream boundary.

### Management options

- The majority of management in the Mimi Estuary is removal of exotics (mainly gorse), fencing and planting of a riparian strip around the margin. This has already begun on the southern RIVER margin and should continue here (only sparse planting at present) and in other areas around the boundary.
- The large area of reclaimed land opposite the sand spit on the north side of the RIVER, that is currently used as grazing pasture, could possibly be returned to wetland and the hillside above planted in natives. If this is not possible, then along with fencing and riparian planting the hillside should be fenced off and planted in natives. This will continue the corridor of forest, that extends almost unbroken from the Mimi Scenic Reserve inland, all the way to the coast.



Figure 20.3 Mimi River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA



## 20.6 Urenui River mouth (site 4)

### Description

Urenui is a very popular seaside town that has high recreational usage including fishing, boating, swimming, beach activities, walking, picnicking, holidaying and golf (NPDC, 1989). The Urenui River mouth has been largely modified although it does retain some of its natural character and its fairly large scale makes it an important coastal area. Much of the area has been reclaimed for either public or private use. While there is relatively little wetland remaining, there are extensive mud/sand flats that provide a food source for wading birds (DoC, 1991). The area is also recognised as having significant landscape value.

The Urenui Domain Recreation Reserve (incorporating the baches and the motor camp) is located on the north-western side of the RIVER and adjoins the golf course. Much of this area is covered by a management plan (NPDC, 1989). The hillside to the east of the golf course is covered by remnant coastal forest from the headland to the upper reaches. In places, exotic and noxious plants (gorse, wattle, woolly-nightshade) invade the forest margin, especially around Te Urenui Historic Reserve located between the south east corner of the golf course and the RIVER. The eastern RIVER margin from the Pa to the sea changes from a untidy mix of flax, wattle, pohutukawa and felled macrocarpa, with the occasional woolly nightshade around the edge of the golf course, to the fairly well planted borders of the motor camp (flax, pohutukawa, sedge). Some areas are also armoured against erosion while other areas are slowly eroding.

The dune face of Urenui Beach, east of the RIVER entrance, is subject to a long-term erosion trend. There is a strip of flax and pohutukawa planting along the beach in front of the motor camp but much of the leading edge is currently being undercut. A management plan has been produced to control the beach erosion (Gibb, 1996a). Beach access is limited by allocating wooden access pathways.

The remnant coastal forest on the western headland of the Urenui River is in better condition than that of the east, although there are some gorse and pine TREES along the top of the hillside. A fairly large stretch of forest stretches far back along this steep hillside, bordering the south side to the township. Along the RIVER margin around the edge of the township on the western riverbank, there are several areas that have been armoured and fortified. Other parts have been

planted in appropriate native plants by the owners (flax and pohutukawa). Narrow grassed areas with picnic tables located between the ROAD and the riverbank (opposite the motor camp and another opposite the golf course) are managed by New Plymouth District Council. The riverbanks in these areas are sometimes eroded and have a mixture of exotics and natives (blackberry, ginger, flax, pohutukawa).

### Boundaries of the SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA

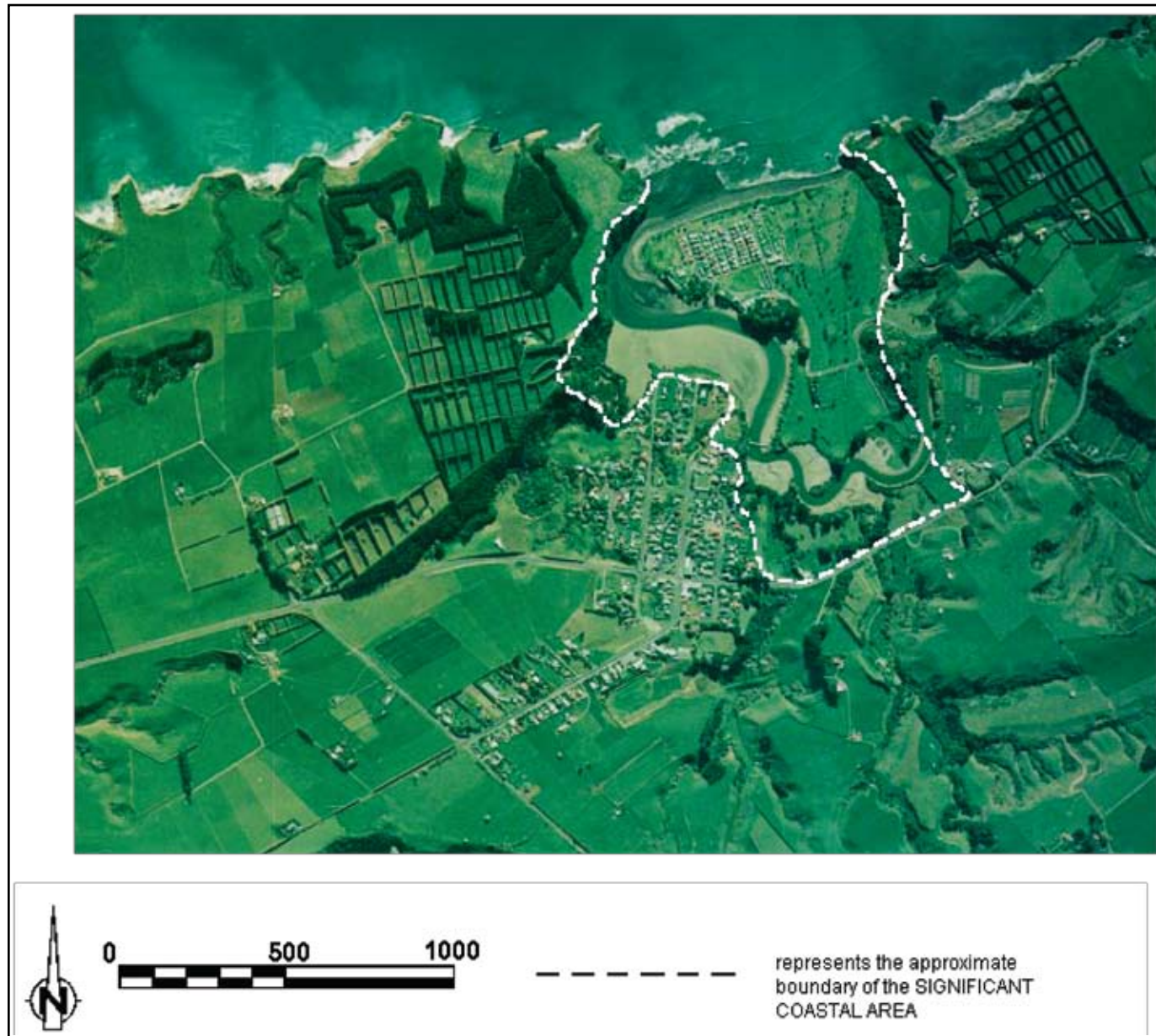
The boundary of the Urenui River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA should extend from the sea to past the last large area of mudflat on the west side of the RIVER, approximately 1.3km along the RIVER (Figure 20.4). The eastern boundary should include the Pa site, golf course and campground and run along the ridge of the RIVER bowl from the sea to the upstream boundary.

Across the RIVER, the western boundary should run along the top of the headland and around the bowl of the RIVER to the township. A line 5-10m back from the RIVER'S edge should delineate the remainder of the SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA to the upriver boundary. New Plymouth District Council owns some of this area and so the boundary should include this land.

### Management options

- Undertake additional TREE planting, particularly on RIVER margins and escarpments, and eradicate the exotics on the eastern side of the RIVER mouth.
- Implement the programme of dune restoration in the form of planting of appropriate species as well as a managed retreat (Gibb 1996).
- Protect the eastern headland from stock, remove gorse and other exotics, and plant native coastal forest species to stabilise the area.
- Protect the coastal forest on the western headland by fencing from above, and remove the gorse and other exotics, including several pine TREES from along the ridge top.
- Encourage property owners along the riverbanks to plant appropriate riparian species.

Figure 20.4 Urenui River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA



## 20.7 Onaero River mouth (site 5)

### Description

The area around the Onaero River mouth includes a campground, private baches, a domain and a surf club and is a popular recreational area. There is no lagoon area behind Onaero Beach, instead there is a wide area of shingle and sandbank. This RIVER mouth is rated nationally important due to a Pa site (Pukemiro) to the south of the camp ground and an ancient Maori pathway that runs from the coast to Te Rau o to Huia inland (DoC, 1991). It is also nationally important geologically (DoC, 1991). It has also been recognised as having significant landscape values.

Both banks of the Onaero River next to SH3 are a mixture of exotics and natives, with gorse, blackberry, wattle and willow. As the RIVER turns sharply towards the sea, it runs close to steep cliffs on its eastern side, with lush native forest (kowhai, rewarewa, karaka, TREE fern) visible. The RIVER'S edge is bordered by raupo and sedge. Towards the RIVER mouth, the Onaero Domain Recreation Reserve is an open grassed area with a mix of TREES and plants such as Norfolk pines, banksia, pohutukawa and flax. The RIVER margin mainly consists of fairly steep banks with pohutukawa, TREE ferns, flax, sedge, and some spinifex down to the RIVER'S edge. Following the RIVER around the spit the banks are fairly well planted with natives until the bank becomes the open coast of a small bay. Here there is erosion along the front of black sand capped clay banks. Both headlands are covered in gorse above steep cliffs, and the eastern headland is severely eroded.

Inside the RIVER mouth on the west side of the RIVER, the gorse topped cliff gives way to a strip of dense remnant coastal forest that runs all the way to SH3. The RIVER flat, occupied by the Onaero motor camp and private baches, is a mix of grasses, raupo, taupata, flax, gorse, ginger and pohutukawa.

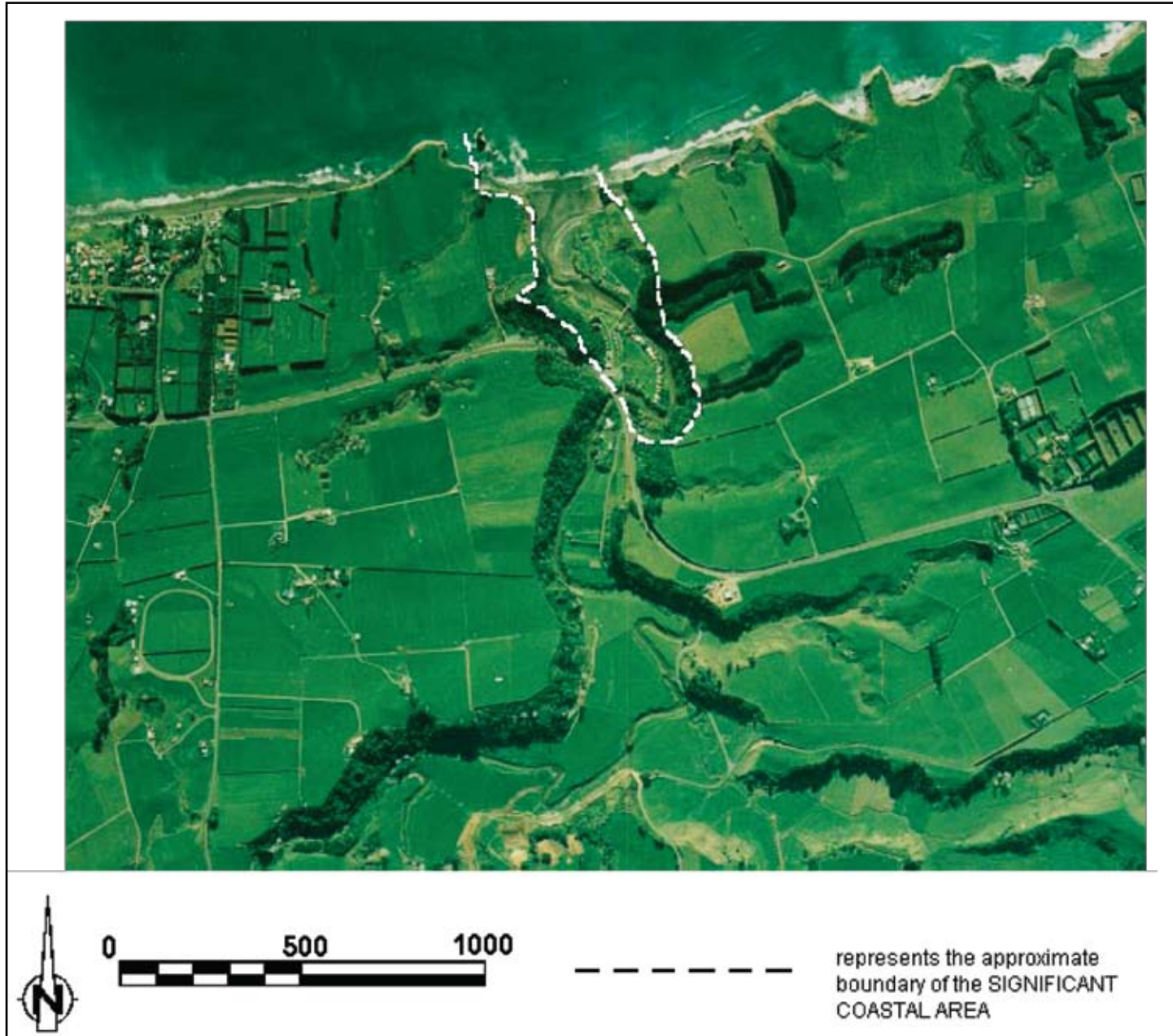
### Boundaries of the SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA

The boundary of the Onaero River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA should extend from the sea to the SH3 road bridge, approximately 700m along the RIVER (Figure 20.5). To the east, the ridge of the high riverbank from the coast to SH3 marks the boundary. To the west, the boundary should run 5-10m back from the cliff edge then up along the ridge of coastal forest covered riverbank all the way to SH3.

### Management options

- Clear gorse, brush wattle and other exotics from both sides of the RIVER between the ROAD bridge and the hairpin turn on the RIVER.
- Protect the bush on the eastern and western ridges by fencing to exclude stock.
- Eradicate exotics from the headlands, stabilise with native vegetation and protect from stock.
- Adopt a programme of dune restoration in the form of planting of appropriate species as well as a managed retreat (as for Urenui).

Figure 20.5 Onaero River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA



## 20.8 Waitara River mouth (site 6)

### Description

The Waitara is the largest and most modified RIVER in New Plymouth District, with extensive armouring of both banks in the form of concrete, boulders and rubble. The RIVER runs through the centre of an urban area with little natural character remaining. Although there have been concerns in the past about the quality of the water, people still fish, whitebait and set flounder nets (DoC, 1991). There is boat access that is well utilised and surfing is popular on the bar. The area has been classified as nationally important geologically (DoC, 1991). The area is also an important wildlife habitat for coastal birds, mainly in the wetland and marshland areas.

The Waitara River mouth has been confined, or partially confined, by moles built of concrete blocks since 1885 (Gibb, 1996b). Today only the west mole is still intact and a small section of the east mole remains isolated from the shore. Inside the remaining section of the east mole the RIVER mouth is controlled by a boulder groyne in front of the Waitara Bar Board Riders Club which continues upstream until the RIVER widens with a large low tide mud flat on the east side.

Further upriver there is an area of riverbank which supports consolidated vegetation interspersed with marsh and wetland species, which is inundated during high flows. Past this area, the bank of the RIVER is again fortified by a concrete retaining wall up to the bridge.

On the western side of the RIVER, a line of pohutukawas, Norfolk pines and other TREES line the top of the bank from the North Street bridge down to the wetland administered by the Department of Conservation. This 2.3ha scenic reserve is dominated by raupo, with occasional taupata, Hebe sp., cabbage TREES, and flax, as well as exotics such as gorse and pampas. The private gardens that back onto the swamp are also fairly well planted in similar natives.

Downstream of the wetland, the western bank is fortified by the concrete wall of the west mole. Marine Park is mainly open grass, with some pohutukawa and banksia hedging. The park is managed by New Plymouth District Council (Waitara Harbour Trust) and is included in the Waitara Reserves Development and Planning Report (1995).

Taranaki Regional Council maintains the stop-banks on both sides of the RIVER as part of the flood control scheme.

### Boundaries of the SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA

The boundary of the Waitara River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA should extend from the sea to the North Street bridge, approximately 700m along the RIVER (Figure 20.6). To the east, the ridge of the stop bank from the coast to the bridge marks the boundary. To the west, the boundary should include the DoC managed wetland and the grassed areas beside the RIVER.

### Management options

- A continuation of the TREE planting that occurs along the western riverbank would enhance the aesthetics of this side of the RIVER, with regard given to the requirements of the flood control scheme.
- Removal of pest species (such as gorse, woolly nightshade, pampas etc.) from the eastern bank and from the DoC wetland on the western bank.
- Advocate for removal of the concrete rubble armouring and replacement with natural materials or disguise by low level planting where practicable.
- Advocacy for riparian management upstream to improve water quality.

Figure 20.6 Waitara River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA



## 20.9 Waiongana Stream mouth (site 7)

### Description

Although this stream mouth is fairly modified, it is quite isolated with little development near the coast. The Department of Conservation has rated this site as nationally important due to the presence of rare and threatened migratory wading birds (DoC, 1991), and the waterway is covered by a riparian management plan (TRC, 1996). This area is also recognised as having significant landscape value.

The relatively narrow stream mouth widens into a lagoon that is approximately 40m wide and almost 700m long. There is also a lagoon to the north that is isolated from the RIVER.

On the western side of the stream the land is mostly a radiata pine plantation, with a slightly eroded grass bank and some gorse. Towards the coast the stream margin opens up to a low grassed area with some flax (planted by the local IWI) and taupata, as well as gorse and boxthorn. There is a fairly wide beach adjacent to the shingle stream mouth. This side of the stream is a Maori Reserve.

The beach on the eastern side is narrower; shingle occupies most of the shore. The eastern head is also mainly covered in grasses that back onto a large stand of pampas. Behind the pampas is a strip of pohutukawa in front of a group of caravans. The pampas continues above the grassed and eroded streambank along the edge of the lagoon, up until the stream constricts and turns to the south. The east bank is terraced in places as part of private flood control works.

The stream mouth is fairly inaccessible by ROAD to the general public. Even though the access is not good, the Waiongana Stream mouth has high recreational usage - white-baiting, surfing and fishing. Kaimoana is gathered from the entire reef area near the stream mouth and the south head is reputedly good shark fishing (DoC, 1991). The relatively limited access of this area will encourage the preservation of the site.

### Boundaries of the SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA

The boundary of the Waiongana Stream mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA should extend from the sea to the end of the lagoon, marked by the constriction of the waterway approximately 800m along the stream, and should include the lagoon to the east of the stream mouth (Figure 20.7). Along both sides of the stream lagoon the boundary should be at the top of the streambank, which is of varying steepness and width.

### Management options

- Eradication of pest species (gorse, boxthorn, etc.) and planting of riparian areas along the stream margin using appropriate species.
- Planting of larger species, such as pohutukawa and taupata, similar to those already planted in the area, higher up the streambanks.
- Planting on the east bank terraces should be restricted to low profile vegetation so as not to impede the RIVER control works.



Figure 20.7 Waiongana Stream mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA



## 20.10 Waiwhakaiho River mouth (site 8)

### Description

The Waiwhakaiho River mouth is located at the northern end of New Plymouth City and lies between the Fitzroy Golf Course and land administered by the Te Rewa Rewa Management Committee. The RIVER mouth and surrounds have been modified by protection works along the riverbanks and clearing of native vegetation although restoration planting is underway. The Waiwhakaiho is used for whitebaiting and is a very diverse koura habitat (DoC, 1991). It is also a good site for fishing and gathering kaimoana, as well as many other coastal activities (e.g. surfing, windsurfing, boating, etc.) (DoC, 1991) and has a high level of recreational usage.

A groyne built of large boulders and concrete protects the south head of the shingle RIVER mouth. To the south of the groyne is a wide sand beach, shingle to the north. Beside the groyne there is a gravel carpark and a large unkempt grass (kikuyu) and scrub area (gorse, blackberry, bracken, boxthorn, taupata) below the Fitzroy Golf Course. Here gravel has been dumped in the past around an area posted as a 'sand stabilisation project'. Moving up the southern riverbank there is a man-made lagoon (remnants of the NZ Farmers Fertiliser industry) that has recently been planted around the edges (olearia, flax and cabbage TREES). There is also abundant gorse in this area and on the actual riverbank, which is grassed and eroded. A road runs from the gravel car park, between the man-made lagoon and the golf course and past Lake Rotomanu. The riverbank adjacent to the lake is grassed, sometimes eroding and in some places recently planted. Around Lake Rotomanu is a mixture of mature exotic and natives. This whole area is incorporated in the Peringa Park Management Plan (NPDC, 1994).

Across the RIVER from Lake Rotomanu the steep riverbank in front of the railway track is fairly eroded in places. Closer to the RIVER mouth, the land administered by the Te Rewa Rewa Management Committee is kept in pasture and is eroded near the edge. The RIVER bed divides closer to the coast; the main channel is to the west, with a secondary branch that empties to the east which only flows under flood conditions and is presently covered in rushes. Between these channels lies an island managed by DoC. This area is covered by gorse, sedge and taupata and is visibly not well managed, probably because of its inaccessibility.

### Boundaries of the SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA

The boundary of the Waiwhakaiho River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA should extend from the sea to the first bend approximately 600m along the RIVER (Figure 20.8). The boundary should include the artificial lagoon on the west side of the RIVER and the grass/scrub area of the western head. A strip of land, located approximately 10m along the bank of the eastern branch of the RIVER and up to the first bend in the RIVER (presently known as the rifle range), should also be within the SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA boundary.

### Management options

- Eradication of exotic pest species (gorse, boxthorn, blackberry, etc.) and planting of riparian vegetation along the RIVER margins and coastal forest species on the western head. Planting has already been initiated in areas along the western bank and around the lagoon, and is planned for the delta area in the near future (DoC and Forest and Bird).
- Addition of public facilities (such as picnic tables, toilet/shower blocks, a defined parking area, etc.).
- Establishment of defined pathways across the dune system that backs onto the beach in this area to ensure damage from foot traffic is minimised.

Figure 20.8 Waiwhakaiho River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA



## 20.11 Centennial Park/Sugar Loaf (Nga Motu) Islands area (site 9)

### Description

The coastal area from Herekawe Stream to Paritutu adjoins the Sugar Loaf Islands Conservation Area (managed by the Department of Conservation) and is comprised of the Paritutu Centennial Park recreation Reserve (managed by New Plymouth District Council). The park and the conservation area are of national ecological (bird life and marine life) and cultural importance (DoC, 1991). This area is also considered a nationally important geological site because of the volcanic forms (the islands and Paritutu) (DoC, 1991) and is a REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE.

Centennial Park is a mixture of grassland (grazed) and patches of scrub. Access to the beach (Paritutu or Back Beach) is from a small car park and grassed BBQ area on the north side of Herekawe Stream. The BBQ area has been planted around in flax and other natives.

The small shingle stream mouth empties to the sea between steep cliffs on both sides that are topped with some gorse/scrub and lower down sedge. High cliffs rise from the beach up to Centennial Park through the area. The cliffs are sometimes eroded and sparsely covered by vegetation and other times fairly well covered with taupata, flax, boxthorn and kikuyu grass. These cliffs are constant all the way around the coast to Paritutu, interrupted by an access way (foot) from a viewing platform at the top of the cliffs adjacent to Motuotamatea Island. Paritutu itself is well covered in dense flax, taupata and karo where bare rock isn't showing.

### Boundaries of the SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA

The boundary of the Centennial Park/Sugar Loaf Islands SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA should extend along the cliff tops of Centennial Park, around Paritutu and include the Herekawe Stream mouth up to Centennial Drive (Figure 20.9).

### Management options

- Eradication of exotics and planting of riparian vegetation should be continued in the car park/picnic area and along the stream margins.
- Across the top of the cliff top and in accessible areas on the cliff face and the foot of the cliff exotic species should be eradicated and low profile (so as not to inhibit the views), hardy vegetation (e.g. taupata) should be planted along the cliff top.
- Access to the beach from Centennial Park should be restricted to the existing pathways.
- A management plan should be formulated for Centennial Park, incorporating native planting complementary to that already existing in the area (flax, taupata and karo) and other coastal forest species and providing for recreational opportunities.

Figure 20.9 Centennial Park/Sugar Loaf Islands SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA



## 20.12 Oakura River mouth (site 10)

### Description

Oakura River mouth is central to a large RIVER bowl with Maori land to the south and a public domain (New Plymouth District Council land) to the north. SH45 crosses the RIVER on the inland edge of the bowl, where the RIVER bends sharply to the south.

To the east of the RIVER mouth small dunes (flax, spinifex, Hebe sp.), back the beach in front of a clubhouse located on the domain. There is some sign of erosion and degradation of the dune system in front of and beside the clubhouse where there is a VEHICLE access. The main part of the domain is comprised of well kept sports fields and is surrounded by dense vegetation (large pohutukawa, beech, kawakawa, flax, taupata and exotics) on the hillside of the RIVER bowl all the way around to SH45.

Adjacent to the domain the riverbank on the northeast side (true right bank) is eroding along the grass bank. The bank is planted with pohutukawa at spaced intervals up to the bridge. Across the RIVER (true left bank) is the Oakura MARAE. The land is grass, with gorse, bracken and wattle although there has been some planting of flax in this area and there is some rock protection on the eroding section. Housing is visible on the ridge above the MARAE.

Inland, across SH45, Oakura River bends to the south. On the eastern bank there is a thin strip of vegetation that is a mix of natives (TREE fern, flax, kawa kawa) and exotics (wattle, gorse, blackberry, macrocarpa) in front of a grassed area beside the ROAD (ROAD reserve). Across the shingle and boulder lined RIVER is a picturesque area of lowland broadleaf forest (kawa kawa, beech, TREE ferns, puriri, rewa rewa) on the steep riverbank that runs from the ROAD bridge inland for approximately 1km. This land is owned by New Plymouth District Council (closed ROAD and esplanade reserve). A few large exotics are visible along the top of the forest (gum TREES).

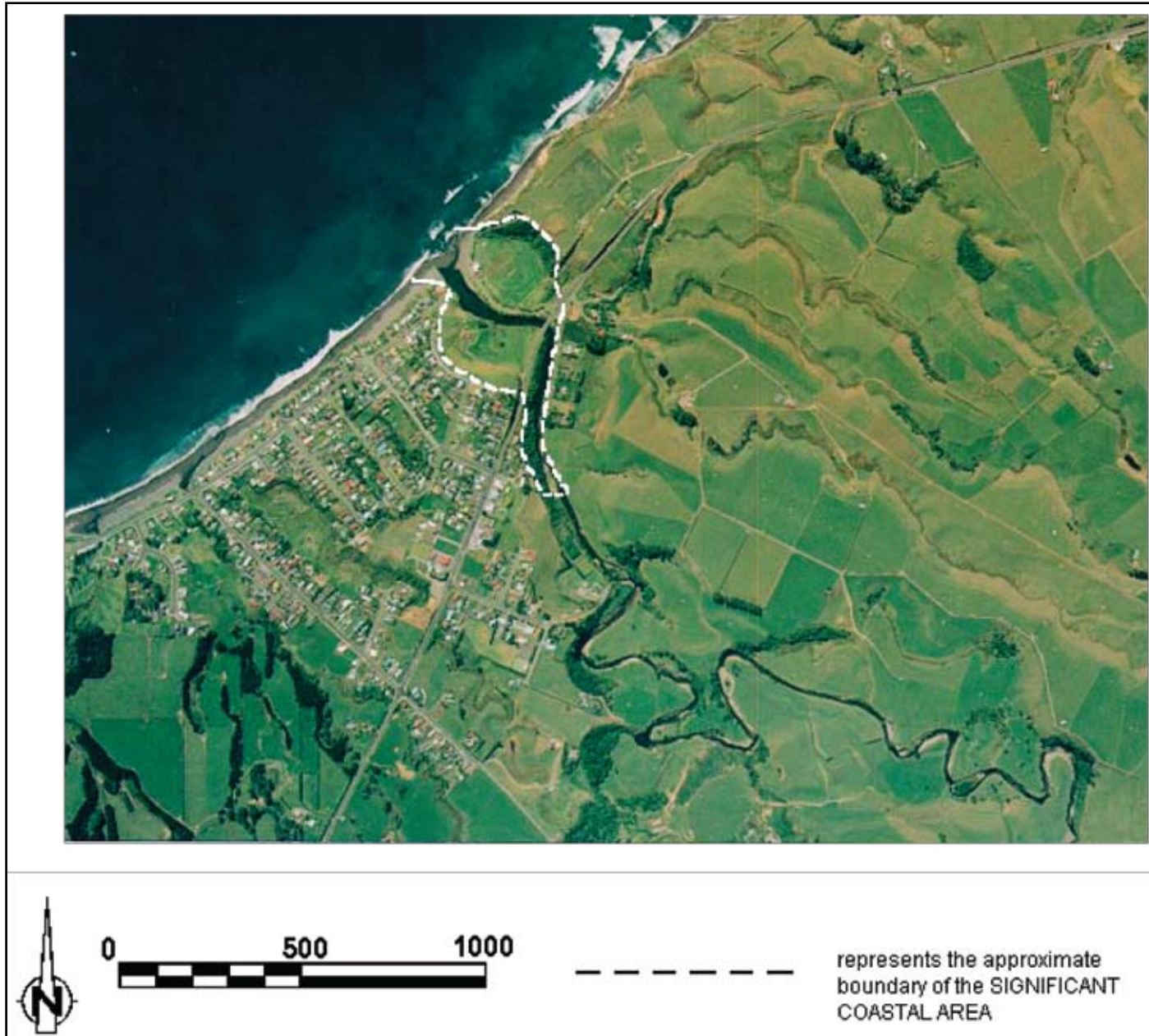
## Boundaries of the SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA

The boundary of the Oakura River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA should extend from the sea to the first bend in the RIVER past SH45 (Figure 20.10). The top of the ridge around the bowl of the RIVER should be the east and west boundaries, north of SH45. The boundary should then run along the top of the ridge of the forested western riverbank and include the flat grassed area beside the road to the east.

### Management options

- Management of the dune system in front of the clubhouse near the beach, including managed access and appropriate planting.
- Adequate provision for parking off the grass/pohutukawa strip adjoining the RIVER and restricted access points, with appropriate planting.
- Redesign or relocation of the stormwater outlet.
- Continued planting of riparian and coastal forest species on the western side of the RIVER mouth.
- Eradication of exotics and planting of riparian vegetation and coastal forest species to the south of SH45. Provision of parking and recreational facilities such as picnic tables and rubbish bins.

Figure 20.10 Oakura River mouth SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREA



## 20.13 References

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