

# CoastCare Northland News

Issue 5 — Summer 2008/09

## Taipa CoastCare winning the war

It has been a long battle to establish dune planting for Taipa CoastCare and its members were happy to show Northland Regional Councillors their efforts during a recent visit to the beach.

The fight to replant the foreshore began in 2006 with the Taipa Beach Improvement Society, which was formed to deal with the problem of vehicles driving dangerously on the reserve in front of the Taipa Area School.

"The group has achieved amazing things and is a real testament to what can be achieved when a community works together," says Laura Shaft, the Northland Regional Council's CoastCare Co-ordinator.

"It has been a real community effort with the society, members of the community and the school all involved," she says.

The first success was achieved with funding from Far North District Council for bollards to restrict vehicle access to the reserve. This provided protection for the dunes and allowed planting to go ahead.

The CoastCare group, which was formed in August under the umbrella of the Taipa Beach Improvement Society, then took over the planting project. The Regional Council provided *spinifex* plants and a donation of *pingao* was made by a community member.

The group planted 800 *spinifex* and 100 *pingao* plants over several days. They were assisted by students from the Area School and local residents. The students also helped prepare the ground for planting by weeding and levelling.

Beach access has also been provided to reduce damage to the plants and make it easier for people to get down to the beach.



*Bollards protect the dune planting from vehicle access.*



*Taipa CoastCare, community and school members join Northland Regional Councillors on the beach during a recent councillor tour of Northland.*

The school has been fully involved in the project with class visits, a CoastCare presentation at assembly to educate students about the importance of dune restoration and planting days.

The project will be extended next winter with further funding from the Regional Council's Environment Fund. Applications will also be made to fund further planting, fencing, signage, bollards and picnic tables. "

**Year 8-9 Taipa students have formed a KidsCare Group — look out for updates in the next issue of *CoastCare News*.**



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Caring for Northland  
and its environment

**NORTHLAND  
REGIONAL  
COUNCIL**



# PROFILE:

## Saving dunes at Tapeka



Before... not pretty!



After... the beach following dune restoration.

Erosion of Russell's picturesque Tapeka foreshore has been halted by the restoration efforts of the Tapeka Ratepayers Association, the local community and the Northland Regional and Far North District Councils.

Flooding of the Tapeka Stream had caused severe erosion and was cutting out the kikuyu grassed reserve. Residents approached the Regional Council about the problem and the CoastCare Co-ordinator, Laura Shaft, worked with the group to come up with a plan to restore the area.

"There was severe erosion caused by the river including extensive damage to the reserve," says Ms Shaft. "We had to rebuild the bank and redirect the stream before planting could begin."

A channel was dug to redirect the stream's flow out to sea and the bank was reshaped by a local digger operator.

Six hundred *spinifex* plants were put in by a group of dedicated helpers on a sunny winter's day – scones and a large bowl of mulled wine helping the process along.

Four sand ladders were constructed to provide access to the beach, protect the newly-planted banks and to discourage beachgoers from walking across them and dislodging the sand and plants. The FNDC will also supply fencing.

"It's been a great outcome and a good example of what a community can do to protect its local environment," says Ms Shaft.

## Dune restoration workshop a success

More than 50 participants attended a recent Dune Restoration Trust New Zealand workshop at Baylys Beach. The October workshop aimed at providing guidelines to local communities and Councils wanting to start dune restoration programmes.

"We are very grateful that the Dunes Trust chose to hold the first of its workshops here in Northland as the information provided is of great relevance and value to Northlanders," says Northland Regional Council CoastCare Co-ordinator Laura Shaft.

"We already have a strong CoastCare programme in Northland with more than 20 groups around the region and we hope the workshop provided inspiration to more coastal communities to take action by setting up and running dune restoration projects."

The workshop, funded by a Ministry for the Environment grant, was the first in a series of events run by the

trust. The events had an emphasis on working with local communities to provide them with the skills to assess the state of their beach and dune systems, to understand the implications of climate change and to restore natural dune form and function.

A series of speakers presented information to representatives from CoastCare groups, trusts, nurseries, the Department of Conservation, District Councils, the Experiencing Marine Reserves education programme and local community members. The day ended with a walk along the beach to look at the work done by the Baylys Beach Society Inc. and to learn more about local dune vegetation and land formations.

Thanks to the Baylys Beach Society for lunch and organising the venue.

Attendees take in dune restoration work at Baylys Beach.



# The pest files

What is a pest plant? The answer to this question can be quite controversial. Many plants listed as pests in the *National Pest Plant Accord 2008* are viewed by people as being pretty or useful in binding dunes.

Dunes are naturally fragile environments and our native dune plants, like *spinifex* and *pingao* are the dunes' natural defence against the elements. Pest plants smother native species and the dunes, restricting the dunes' natural ability to retain sand.

A number of well-known garden plants have crept into our dunes and they are slowly strangling the native vegetation, causing more harm than good.

In this issue, we focus on some of these controversial pest plants.

## Ice Plant



South African ice plant  
(*Carpobrotus edulis*)

Horokaka—native  
ice plant

There are 2 types of ice plant found on our dunes - the pink-flowered native Horokaka (*disphyma australe*) and the more commonly seen yellow-flowered South African ice plant (*carpobrotus edulis*).

South African ice plant has fleshy succulent leaves 7-12cm long. Hybrids of the same species are slightly smaller and flowers can be pink, orange, yellow or off-white. It is often grown in coastal gardens and spreads, forming a dense mat that covers native vegetation.



Kikuyu  
(*Pennisetum clandestinum*)

To remove South African ice plant pull it out by hand and turn upside down to dry. Ideally the plants should be removed from the site.

## Kikuyu

Kikuyu (*Pennisetum clandestinum*) is a particularly invasive grass found throughout Northland. It is not a legally declared pest plant but is a threat to all native dune plant species.

It almost completely stops regeneration by smothering seedlings and other low growing plants.

Despite the belief kikuyu holds dunes together, it is very inefficient. The roots are incapable of holding sand and the dunes collapse and erode from beneath it.



White flowering  
*Cortaderia selloana*



Purple flowering  
*Cortaderia jubata*



Native toetoe

## Pampas

There are two types of pest pampas grass – purple pampas (*Cortaderia jubata*) and the white-flowering variety (*Cortaderia selloana*). It forms giant clumps that can grow up to 4m or more and spreads by seed far and wide. It replaces all ground cover varieties, creates a fire hazard and provides a habitat for possums and rats.

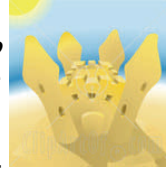
Pampas is often confused with native Toetoe (*Cortaderia richardii*). It forms smaller clumps of weeping grass, as opposed to the more upright form of pest pampas.

**Other common pest plants** on the coast include Cape Ivy (*Senesio angulatus*), the yellow-flowering ivy that smothers everything in its path; Agapanthus, a popular garden plant that also spreads and covers native species; Agave, the well-known succulent, and Arctotis, a South African daisy.



# CoastCare Kids

Summer is here and it's time to have some fun at the beach. With all the sand getting trapped on our dunes by *spinifex* and *pingao* you will be able to build some awesome sand castles on the beach!



You can also take part in a family fun day at a beach near you or try collecting seeds from our great coastal plants.

Read on to find out more...

## Safe beach driving family fun days!

This summer come and join the fun at your local beach. Sand castle competitions, beach clean-up hunts, guided dune walks (and even a sausage sizzle at some of the beach days) will be coming to a beach near you this December.

Everyone knows summer is a great time to be at the beach. It is also when there are more cars on Northland's beaches and we want you to be safe this summer. Our family fun days are all about learning what to do to stay safe on our beaches.

Bring Mum and Dad along as there will be lots of information for them about safe beach driving and you can enjoy the competitions and activities.

## Kids Challenge

Taipa Area School kids have set up a KidsCare group. The challenge is going out — kids from other schools around the region unite to form the first KidsCare network in New Zealand! If you or your school is interested in joining or starting a KidsCare group, contact Laura Shaft (see details below) for information about what you need to do.

We also want your work — if you've got a groovy beach picture or fun puzzle for this kids page, we want to hear from you. Send your ideas or work to Laura!

Tokerau Beach	13 Dec
Ruakaka	14 Dec
Baylys Beach	20 Dec
Ahipara	21 Dec
[Listen to MORE FM and Radio Northland on the day for any cancellations]	



*Spinifex* seed head

## Seed collecting

Seed collection days will be held in January at a number of beaches so come and join the fun.

We will show you the best way to collect seeds to make sure you get plenty of good quality seed for planting.

*Spinifex* seed-heads with strange black lumps half way up the spikes have a fungus called Black Smut. This means the seed will not germinate.

If you collect the seeds you find racing along the beach before the collection days, store them in breathable bags. Paper rubbish bags are ideal — plastic bags can cause mould to grow on the seeds, which will destroy them.

Contact Laura Shaft for more information about seed collection and the dates of the collection days.

## Further information

If you wish to discuss anything raised in this newsletter, please contact:



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