

Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

	Unit name – WEST COAST OCEAN BEACH
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
Land Types <small>(refer to list overleaf)</small> Ocean Beach Duneland.	Characterised by its exposure, simplicity of form and scale, this land type comprises the beach and its immediate sand dune, or coastal escarpment backdrop only. At the southern end, the unit becomes more extensive, encompassing the rolling duneland land type at the southern end of the Pouto Peninsula.
Geology <small>(including geopreservation sites)</small>	The majority of the unit comprises Holocene unconsolidated transverse and parabolic dunes. Bayley's Beach is a Nationally Important Geological Site for lignites and dune sands, and that Bayley's Beach dune sand demonstrates historic rises and falls in sea level since the Pliocene period. (Kenny & Hayward 1996)
Soil Types	The majority of the seaward edge of this unit comprises drifting / recently stabilized sands. Along much of the coast, the unit is overlain by a discontinuous ribbon of Pinaki sand, and at the southern end of the unit this type becomes more extensive. The soils within the landward portion of the entire unit, with the exception of the southern area comprise Red Hill sand.
Ecology <small>(including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)</small>	The Kaipara Ecological District PNAP report describes the west coast ocean beach thus: <i>"Spinifex sandfield occurs in one long, virtually continuous belt on the inland side of unconsolidated frontal dunes on the coastline between Aranga Beach and Pouto Point, mostly in environment G1. Apart from spinifex, a wide range of other native and adventive species is present, but only six of them (knobby clubrush, tauhinu, tree lupin, sand coprosma, adventive iceplant, coastal toetoe) occur consistently. About half the flora is adventive.</i> <i>.....Sandfield occurs in one long, virtually continuous belt on the seaward side of unconsolidated frontal dunes on the coastline between Aranga Beach and Pouto Point. Vegetative cover is minimal, consisting of a similar range of species as spinifex sandfield. Only spinifex is consistently present."</i> Significant flora and fauna identified within the unit and listed in the PNAP report are as follows: Pingao (Gradual Decline) and sand coprosma (Regionally Significant), Northern New Zealand dotterel (Nationally Vulnerable), Caspian tern (Nationally Vulnerable), white-fronted tern (Gradual Decline), variable oystercatcher (Regionally Significant), black-backed gull, pied shag, white- faced heron, Australasian pied stilt, New Zealand pipit.
Archaeological sites	None known.
Heritage Landscapes	None known.

Landscape characterisation

(including the identification of any specific characteristics)

This unit extends along the majority of the Tasman coastline, and the western edge of the District. It is approximately 78km in length starting about 13km above the apex of North Head and running up to the District's northern boundary at the Waipoua River. Maunganui Bluff (which is defined as a separate unit) forms the only short break in this unit.

The character of this unit is very exposed and remote, with limited opportunities for access and few isolated settlements. The beach stretches in a simple virtually straight line and has a consistent cross section with the intertidal expanse of the beach running up to the elevated bank of the historic dune. Erosion of the exposed rocky headlands, and deposition of sand in the embayments, has resulted in this relatively straight shoreline on this coast.

The scale and homogeneity of this coastline is of particular importance.

Vegetation cover is rather sparse. Dunefield grasses are found on the least mobile areas of sand and either pasture or a mixed coastal scrub of exotic and indigenous species clothes most of the backshore bank. More established vegetation including flax and pohutukawa is found in the gullies, which occasionally open out onto the beach.

Pockets of more significant dunefield occur such as in the vicinity of Aranga Beach and Glinks Gully where the unit supports a relatively intact sequence of coastal dune vegetation, with a representative range of native sand species, including threatened and regionally significant species. Also present are a diverse range of vulnerable and significant fauna.

Built development occurs in isolated pockets at Glinks Gully, Bayleys Beach, Omamari and Aranga. These tend to be restricted in area and have a limited impact on the character of the beach.

EVALUATION

Criteria	Rank	Comment
Natural Science Factors		
Representativeness Natural landscapes are clearly characteristic of the area, district or region. The key components of the landscape will be present in a way that defines the character of the place and distills its character and essence. Endemic associations.	5	The extensive, wild, remote and unmodified character of the beach contributes to the perception of an endemic and 'Northland' character. Pockets of traditional settlement including the vernacular character development also contribute to that character in the vicinity of those settlements. Sand dune vegetation associations and the occasional presence of pohutukawa in gullies. The scale and character of the beach reflects that found to the south as Muriwai and Rangitira Beaches, and to the north as Ninety Mile Beach.
Rarity Natural features are unique or rare in the region or nationally, and few comparable examples exist.	5	Although not rare in a local sense, the unit is rare on a national scale.
Aesthetic Values		
Coherence The patterns of land cover and land use are largely in harmony with the underlying natural pattern of the landform of the area and there are no significant discordant elements of land cover or land use.	4	Strong visual evidence of natural coastal erosion and deposition processes. These include long shore drift processes and sand dune accretion and vegetation processes.
Diversity & Complexity The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.	3	The unit displays simplicity of form and composition that hints at a limited diversity. Ecological processes are compromised along much of the unit due to invasion by

		weed grass and other species.
<p>Vividness</p> <p>Natural features and landscape are widely recognised across the community and beyond the local area and remain clearly in the memory; striking landscapes are symbolic of an area due to their recognisable and memorable qualities.</p>	5	<p>The vertical scale of the coastal scarp slope emphasizes the linearity and scale of the coast and beach and the containment provided by this slope contrasts strongly with the open ocean.</p> <p>Views to north feature the massive presence of Maunganui Bluff.</p> <p>The coastal scarp and flatness of the beach presents a very strong and simple landscape patterning that is only punctuated by stream gullies opening onto the beach. These associated with native vegetation and this forms its own irregular rhythm as the observer progresses along the beach.</p>
<p>Naturalness</p> <p>How affected by human activity is the landscape? Does human activity intrude on the landscape? Eg.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of buildings and associated built development. • Presence of infrastructure services. • Extent of indigenous forest cover. • Homogeneity of exotic vegetation. • Presence / extent of modified agricultural land use. • Strength of natural processes / ecological patterns. • Unmodified and legible physical relief and landform. • Presence of water. 	3	<p>The unit appears to have retained a high level of naturalness, although small bach communities punctuate the beach on the edge of the unit. Generally these are contained by the landform (clustered in the shelter of valleys) and are simple in character. Whilst reducing the perception of remoteness and naturalness, this is very localized and the coast between the settlements is unaffected by the presence of these settlements.</p> <p>Character of coastal margin is open with low vegetation of a homogenous character, although exotic grasses do evidence modified ecological processes.</p> <p>Pastoral land use extending to the coastal margin with evidence of erosion caused by stock.</p>
<p>Intactness</p> <p>Natural systems are intact and aesthetically coherent and do not display significant visual signs of human modification, intervention or manipulation, visually intact and highly aesthetic natural landscapes.</p>	3	<p>The beach and foreshore retain a strong level of intactness, however the escarpment and foredunes have been modified by grazing and invasion of exotic grass species. Intact pockets of native vegetation remain, notably to the north of Aranga.</p>
Experiential Values		
<p>Expressiveness</p> <p>The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.</p>	5	<p>The feature clearly displays evidence of coastal erosive and depositional processes.</p>
<p>Sensory qualities</p> <p>(These are landscape phenomena as directly perceived and experienced by humans, such as the view of a scenic landscape, or the distinctive smell and sound of the foreshore).</p>	5	<p>The proximity of the sea, and lack of shelter on the spit enables the observer to experience views and the smell of the ocean and spray during wild weather, as well as the sound of the surf.</p>
<p>Transient Values</p> <p>The consistent and repeated occurrence of transient features that contributes to the character, qualities and values of the landscape; landscapes are widely recognised for their transient features and the contribution that these make to the landscape.</p>	4	<p>Cycles of roosting / nesting of native fauna, as well as migratory cycles provide a transient element to the endemic character.</p> <p>In addition, seasonal changes also contribute to the transient values of the unit.</p>

<p>Remoteness / Wildness Does the landscape display a wilderness character, remote from and untouched by human presence? Eg.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of remoteness • Accessibility • Distance from built development 	3	<p>It is possible to gain a powerful feeling of remoteness when distanced from the settlements and beach accesses. Long views along beach are available with minimal intrusion from built development influences perception of remoteness.</p> <p>In addition the power and noise of the surf can contribute to the feeling of remoteness and naturalness.</p> <p>Access is possible along beach by vehicle.</p>
<p>Shared and recognised values Natural features and landscape are widely known and valued by the immediate and wider community for their contribution to a sense of place leading to a strong community association with, or high public esteem for the place.</p>	5	<p>The west coast beaches are highly valued and cherished by the community particularly for their recreational values.</p>
<p>Spiritual, cultural and historical associations Natural features and landscapes can be clearly and widely known and influenced by their connection to the spiritual, cultural and historical valued in the place and includes associative meanings and associative activities valued by the community. These can include both activities and meanings associative meanings are spiritual, cultural or social associations with particular landscape elements, features, or areas, whilst associative activities are patterns of social activity that occur in particular parts of a landscape, for example, popular walking routes or fishing spots.</p>	3	<p>Consultation was initiated during the mapping process, but has not led to any feedback within the required period.</p> <p>Pa site indicated on NZMS 260 map at Moremonui Gully. Much of coast is very dynamic and visible evidence may not remain.</p>

Rank scale between 1 (low) and 5 (high)

Land Types
Coastal cliffs / escarpment
Low escarpment
Bays and headlands
Beach
Dune complex
Reefs and islands
Estuarine / inlet
Open harbour
Coastal plain
Rolling hills
Steep hills; moderate to high relief
Ranges; high relief
Strongly rolling land
Low rolling land
Valley floors and flats
Plains
Volcanic cones
River mouth
Wetland
Watercourses
Lakes and water bodies

Photographs of unit



View to west coast



View south along west coast