

Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

	Unit name – OPITO AND PAROA COAST
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
Land Types <small>(refer to list overleaf)</small> Coastal cliffs / escarpment Bays and headlands Beach Reefs and islands	Fringes the perimeter of the enclosed Paroa Bay, which is excluded from this ONL.
Geology <small>(including geopreservation sites)</small>	Paleozoic – Mesozoic Waipapa Terrane greywacke
Soil Types	Rangiora clay, clay loam and silty clay loam, Manganese silt loam and Marua light brown clay loam.
Ecology <small>(including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)</small>	<p>Identified as part of the wider Russell Forest with connecting fingers that reach the coast in this area. Whilst kanuka and manuka dominated shrubland appear to be the prevailing species amongst the vegetation cover, there are areas where evident “pohutukawa coastal forest on hillslope” and pockets of “taraire–kohekohe–puriri forest on hillslope” exist. Other tree species commonly present include towai , tanekaha, totara and kauri.</p> <p>In terms of significance, the wider Russell Forest, and its contiguous areas of private and Crown–owned forest, constitutes one of the largest contiguous forest blocks in the Eastern Northland Ecological Region. The area contains a significant number of threatened animal and plant species and is a representative site for 6 forest types</p>
Archaeological sites	Kahuwhera, Paroa and a third pa associated with Tarawatangata point on the northeastern headland to Paroa Bay. This headland contains a particular intensity of recorded sites, with a further 5 being identified on the segment of ONL associated with Opito Bay.
Heritage Landscapes	Integrally related to the history and use of the Bay of Islands.
Landscape characterisation <small>(including the identification of any specific characteristics)</small> <p>This unit combines the sweeping peninsula form that contains Paroa Bay to the north east, with the rocky flank and small embayments that continue down the Russell peninsula to the north west. The Opito Bay portion of the unit is backed by much higher hills that the Paroa Bay peninsula – which is generally very narrow – but in other respects the two discrete areas share much in common to justify them being placed in a single landscape unit.</p> <p>When seen from further offshore, particularly on the primary navigation route that swings between Tapeka Point and Albert Channel, the perception of Paroa Bay’s existence is diminished so that these two pieces of coastal terrain read almost as one.</p> <p>Unifying aspects include a shoreline that is characterised by a sequence of rocky bluffs, minor headlands, narrow reefs and a regular pattern of contained small bays where the inland terrain is less severe. Pockets of pasture are also common to both, with that grassland being seen as being in the minority relative to adjacent areas of native shrubland cover. Whilst the inner part of Paroa Bay has a moderate density of large-lot settlement (and is outside of this ONL) the areas covered by this unit tends to involve much larger properties with commensurately largely dwellings that are more widely spaced – typically in conjunction with the short sections of soft coast found in the minor embayments.</p>	

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.	4	Is representative of this mainland shore of the Bay of Islands, but also replicated elsewhere around the eastern coast.
Rarity Natural features are unique or rare in the region or nationally, and few comparable examples exist.	3	Relatively common in the adjacent area, but less so on a wider 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.	3	Repeated patterns of landscape composition in terms of topography and alignment, and a theme of large areas of native shrubland broken by zones of pasture or mown grass. The scale and prominence of some buildings on the Opito Bay part of the unit detract somewhat from unity..
Diversity & Complexity The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.	4	Topographically diverse, with added layers of complexity created by the interaction with the sea and vegetation associations.
Vividness Natural features and landscape are widely recognized 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.	4	Experienced as part of the containing landform that defines this coast of the Bay of Islands.
Naturalness How affected by human activity is the landscape? Does human activity intrude on the landscape? Eg. <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	A settled landscape, albeit sporadically, but one where the natural characteristics remain clearly dominant. Natural topography appears generally intact, with only minor modification associated with dwellings and access. More substantial landform changes in the recent subdivision have been comprehensively addressed through detailing and planting. This ONL is clearly related to the semi-sheltered waters of this corner of the overall bay, so connections with the sea are integral to and bring a strong component of natural character.
Intactness 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.	4	Some localised impact by residential settlement, but the natural patterns are dominant.
Experiential Values		
Expressiveness The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.	3	Moderately legible, with the peninsula being the more expressive of the two portions of this ONL. Landform, vegetation patterns and grassland, and coastal form are the key elements that contribute..

<p>Sensory qualities (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>	4	Has a strong sense of local character and relatedness to the wider Bay of Islands.
<p>Transient Values 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>	3	Influenced by sea state in the area running across to Motuarohia (Robertson) Island and Moturoa further beyond. Those short term changes are expected not to be particularly dramatic due to the sheltered nature of that waterbody.
<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	Moderately settled, but set some distance off of mainland public access and primary boating corridors.
<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>	4	Whilst likely not to be extensively known for its own qualities, this area is closely related to the wider identity and character of the Bay of Islands. Paroa Bay provides a reasonable measure of protection, so is one of the favoured anchorages in adverse conditions.
<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. 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>	***	<p>Consultation was initiated during the mapping process, but has not led to any feedback within the required period</p> <p>Connections with the Bay of Islands and its cultural, recreational, scientific and tourism related aspects.</p>

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





