

Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

	Unit name – SPIRITS (PIWHANE) BAY
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
Land Types <small>(refer to list overleaf)</small> Beach Dune complex Wetlands Lakes and waterbodies	A broad ocean beach defined by headlands at either end. An extensive dunefield that contains the backshore wetlands, lakes and lagoon. Low hills descend to contain the inland edges of those wet areas.
Geology <small>(including geopreservation sites)</small>	Holocene foredunes and peat alluvial flats. Tangihua Complex igneous rock under foothills and spurs.
Soil Types	Te Kopuru sand, Pinaki sand, Tawharanui peaty sand, Hurewai fine sandy loam, Kapowairua clay and silty clay, Kara sandy loam, Otakairangi peaty clay loam, eroded remains of Red Hill sandy clay loam, Mangonui clay, Huia steepland soils, stony clay and stony silt loam.
Ecology <small>(including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)</small>	<p>Dunes have a dominance of <i>Spinifex</i> with a range of other indigenous coastal dune/saltmarsh species in lesser concentrations and related across the zones of foredune through to inland face of dunes that dam and create the wetland areas. The Kapowairua dunefield is considered to be a significant example of extensive sand dunes with limited modification compared to most other areas and provides habitat to a number of threatened species.</p> <p>The backshore area contains a number of wetland and marginal shrubland associations. The Paranoa Swamp, Waitahora Lagoon and Waitahora Lakes wetland complex have been ranked by NIWA as being outstanding, in recognition of their pristine condition and the range of threatened and regionally significant species present. A nationally endangered bladderwort is found here.</p> <p>Inland foothills and spurs are part of the Te Paki Shrublands, a predominantly manuka shrubland on infertile slopes and ridges. Part of a much wider Site of National Conservation Significance.</p>
Archaeological sites	Overlooked by a number of pa around headlands to either end of the bay and on foothills inland of the beach and wetland sequence. These include Puketoa, Waipapakauriki, and Rangitane. Archaeological sites are concentrated around the freshwater streams and lagoons and either end of the beach, with a light distribution in the backdune area along the main body of the bay.
Heritage Landscapes	
Landscape characterisation <small>(including the identification of any specific characteristics)</small> A powerful and interwoven landscape that commences with the subtle sweep of Te Horo Beach sitting within Tohureo Point to the west and Hooper Point to the east. Either end of the bay is contained close to the coast by low foothills, with the central portion extending inland up the Paranoa Swamp with a rich cover of wetland species. Open water bodies in the form of Waitahora Lakes and Waitahora Lagoon stand on the edge of the beach and a narrow dune belt. Indigenous vegetation prevails, from the shrubland associations of the foothill, the wetland and freshwater riparian plant cover and the <i>Spinifex</i> -dominant cover over much of the dunes.	

Overall this is a very cohesive and dynamic landscape that has an integral relationship with the sea, being sometimes exposed to substantial waves from the north. Spirits Bay is a well-known destination and camping location that is one of the key visitor attractions of the top end of the Aupouri Peninsula.

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	One of the most evocative coastal landscapes in Northland, with a broad and simple form, clearly resolved natural vegetation patterns and connecting elements, in the form of creeks, wetlands and rocky points, that form part of the wider context and are a very typical of Northland (although rarely in such intact form).
Rarity Natural features are unique or rare in the region or nationally, and few comparable examples exist.	4	An ocean beach system that is in unusually good condition. Includes a number of ecological types that are rare or threatened elsewhere.
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.	5	Highly unified and cohesive. Component parts of the wider ONL respond to natural site conditions and are therefore structured or inter-related in a way that is bold yet interesting.
Diversity & Complexity The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.	5	Contains a number of element and systems, and is shaped by several forces, including wind, rain, tide, longshore drift,
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.	5	Extremely vivid and memorable, in part due to the essential simplicity and graphic legibility. An "iconic" Northland ocean beach.
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. 	5	No buildings within unit and majority of the landscape has almost no sign of human intervention. Minor structures associated with walkways and some areas of remaining kikuyu grassland at the western end of the unit. Natural processes apparently intact, dynamic and active.
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.	5	Largely in a completely natural state and with a striking aesthetic presence as a result of that naturalness and its bold underlying composition.

Experiential Values		
Expressiveness The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.	5	Highly legible and entirely expressive of natural elements and processes that continue to shape this landscape, particularly in relation to the dunefield, lagoon and foreshore.
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).	5	As a remote and undeveloped area that is open to northerly coastal conditions, Spirits Bay is a place where visitors are infused with the conditions of the day. Often this will include waves advancing up the beach, but may include still or misty conditions that sometimes prevail. The scale of this landscape, with its lengthy beach, broad backdune/lagoon, expansive connection with the sea and enframing sequences of hills to either side are influential in the experience.
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.	5	Highly influenced by tide, sea state, light conditions and wind. The scale and openness of this coastal landscape means that conditions are experienced very directly.
Remoteness / Wildness Does the landscape display a wilderness character, remote from and untouched by human presence? Eg. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of remoteness • Accessibility • Distance from built development 	4	With the exception of the unsealed road and low-key DoC campground at the eastern end of the Bay, the area must be accessed on foot. Heavily populated in association with the campground during summer, then almost deserted for the balance of the year.
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.	4	A well known destination and an evocative area that many are familiar with.
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.	5	<p>Connection with Te Rerengawairua, for spirits travelling up the eastern coastline.</p> <p>A very popular summer camping area and beach/rock fishing destination. Many campers return year after year and it has become an intergenerational tradition amongst some families.</p> <p>Consultation was initiated during the mapping process, but has not led to any feedback within the required period.</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









