

Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

	Unit name – HORAHORA NGUNGURU RIVER INLET
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
Land Types Central rolling hills; low undulating land type Estuarine / inlet land type	<p>Comprising two tidal rivers and their estuarine margins, linked by low undulating hills, and to the north a more dominant ridge and headland known as Kumi Point.</p> <p>The headland, associated ridge and high point is widely visible from the north and forms a southern end to Ngunguru Bay.</p>
Geology (including geopreservation sites)	<p>Coastal hills of Waipapa Terrane greywacke adjoining Ngunguru Estuary.</p> <p>Dunelands comprise holocene sandy foredunes Coastal headlands and hillcountry of Waipapa Terrane greywacke bounded by the Horahora and Ngunguru Estuaries on the inland side.</p>
Soil Types	<p>The soils within this unit are a complex mix of a variety of types. Most common is Rangiora silty clay loam which is found on the elevated ridges, whilst on the estuarine margins, fingers of Takahiwai sand and Takahiwai peaty sand occupy the wet areas. On the ocean coast to the north of the Horahora River mouth Marua light brown clay loam is present, and to the north of this, the headland is overlain with Tikitohe reddish gravelly silt loam.</p>
Ecology (including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)	<p>Identified in the Whangaruru Ecological District PNAP report as Q06/101 (Whakareora Coastal Habitat), this Level 1 site comprises 152 ha of forest, 193 ha of shrubland, and 19 ha of wetland). It is a large area of coastal forest and shrubland situated at the base of Ngunguru Sandspit and links the Ngunguru and Horahora Estuaries.</p> <p>The area has been farmed and burned in the past, and is now composed primarily of young, regenerating forest. Some remnants of mature forest still remain in gullies and along the coastline.</p> <p>The majority of the site, especially the area around the trig station, is dominated by kanuka/manuka shrubland. Relative frequency and composition of associated species differs across this area, but, in general, the following species are frequent to occasional, and are emergent over the kanuka/manuka: kauri, rimu, puriri, tanekaha, totara, and rewarewa.</p> <p>Whakareora shows a full sequence of coast, estuarine–brackish–freshwater wetland, shrubland, and coastal forest. It contains a high diversity of threatened and regionally significant plants and animals. This includes pingao (Gradual Decline), <i>Mida salicifolia</i> (Gradual Decline), <i>Fuchsia procumbens</i> (Sparse), monoao (Sparse), kawaka (Sparse). <i>Calystegia tugoriorum</i>, coastal maire, hard beech reported, tawapou, coastal tussock, and <i>Hebe</i> “Whangarei” (all Regionally Significant).</p> <p>The forested area contains common forest birds, as well as kukupa (Gradual Decline), and NI brown kiwi (Serious Decline) reported in the past. The saltmarsh/wetland areas contain matuku (Nationally Endangered), banded rail (Sparse), NI fernbird (Sparse), and spotless crane (Sparse). Pateke (Nationally Endangered) have been present in the past, and could potentially recolonise.</p>

	<p>Beaches adjacent to the site have reef heron (Nationally Endangered), northern New Zealand dotterel (Sparse), and variable oystercatcher (Regionally Significant). White heron (Nationally Critical) are frequent visitors to the area. Black mudfish (Gradual Decline) have been recorded in several wetlands on the south side of the site. Contains the threatened snail <i>Amborhytida dunni</i> (Gradual Decline).</p> <p>This is a unique coastal site in that it has the only area of kawaka coastal forest recorded in Northland.</p> <p>To the north, site Q06/120 (Ngunguru Remnants) is a Level 1 site that comprises 181 ha of forest and 61 ha of shrubland.</p> <p>The site is of significance due to the presence of threatened species. In addition, remnants provide a buffer for the Ngunguru Estuary. The site is also representative for a number of ecological types including kanuka/manuka-rimu-totara forest, and kanuka/manuka-kauri-totara forest.</p> <p>The landscape also includes the site identified as Q06/178 (Horahora Dunes). This site comprises an area of 1.7 ha.</p> <p>A small area of foredune is located on the northern side of the Horahora River mouth. The vegetation in this area consists of coastal sandfield, with occasional spinifex, knobby clubrush, pohuehue, and exotic grasses, in the vicinity of a solitary pohutukawa.</p> <p>The site is of significance due to the presence of a threatened landsnail (<i>Succinea archeyi</i> (Serious Decline)).</p>
Archaeological sites	The area is understood to have significant cultural values and a number of archaeological sites.
Heritage Landscapes	None known.
<p>Landscape characterisation (including the identification of any specific characteristics)</p> <p>Both the Ngunguru and Horahora Rivers display a strong sense of detachment from the open coastline, a sense of enclosure and serenity. They are characterised by a convoluted river channel with containing ridges and banks, with many of the low ridges vegetated with native coastal tree and shrubland species down to water level.</p> <p>The landform adjoining the river is undulating and low lying, dominated by low coastal shrubland associations. In contrast, the land adjoining the Ngunguru River upstream of the settlement) is higher in elevation and more steeply sloping with a greater scale of vegetation. A number of the ridgetops adjoining the river on its northern have been cleared for grazing, although vegetation has been retained on the steep ridge sides.</p> <p>The Horahora River in particular displays a good transect of habitat from marine species associations through to freshwater and terrestrial and this lends the river a strong sense of naturalness. Fingers of wetland extend up shallow gullies for some distance and create a complex mosaic of vegetation types.</p> <p>With small coastal flats, they possess extensive intertidal areas.</p> <p>Some built development has been established on the low hills nearer the coast overlooking the Horahora River, with some earthworks associated with tracks detracting to some extent from the</p>	

coherence of the native vegetation cover. This area is accessed from the end of the Ngunguru Ford Road, but access is restricted by a locked gate.

Views into this area and the remainder of the Horahora estuary are limited, although glimpses of the river are available from Pataua North Road where it winds along the southern bank of the river for a short distance.

Rising above the low lying river margins, and separating the Horahora River mouth from Ngunguru Spit, Whakareora is a low rounded hill of some 117 m in height. This hill, and the associated ridges that extent west to the ocean are vegetated with a diverse complex of native coastal vegetation, including rare kawakawa – kauri associations.

The unit has a remote and highly natural character.

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 landform and vegetation associations are highly representative of the coastal location and the unit contains a diverse range of endemic ecological types.
Rarity Natural features are unique or rare in the region or nationally, and few comparable examples exist.	5	The character, sense of remoteness and vegetation associations are rare in the region.
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	Despite some modification associated with built development, and clearance of vegetation on the low ridges along the Ngunguru River, the unit displays a high level of coherence.
Diversity & Complexity The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.	5	The unit displays a high level of diversity and complexity in terms of its ecological values.
Vividness 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.	4	The unit displays a serene and sheltered character and the relationship between the meandering river channels and the contextual landform and vegetation makes the area highly memorable and vivid.
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. 	4	The majority of the unit displays a high level of naturalness with only limited evident human activity. Fragmentation of the vegetation on the ridge tops along the north side of the Ngunguru River tends to diminish the apparent naturalness, but this modification is slight and confined to the context of the unit rather than within the unit itself. Vegetation types and patterns are clearly representative of topography, drainage patterns and slope aspect, and this suggests a high level of strength of natural processes.

<p>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.</p>	4	The unit displays a high level of intactness.
Experiential Values		
<p>Expressiveness The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.</p>	5	The unit displays a high level of legibility in terms of the hydrological processes that have shaped the landform and vegetation. The complexity and spatial arrangement of vegetation reflects the underlying topographical form of the unit.
<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>	5	<p>The character and thus sensory quality of the unit varies depending on the location. To the east of Whareora, on the ridges near the coastal cliff tops the exposure and relationship to the ocean provides a dramatic experience.</p> <p>Inland, nearer the rivers on the low lying land the experience is more sheltered and peaceful, but still attractive and distinctive.</p>
<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>	4	<p>Strongly influenced by the tide, the rivers display marked changes in character over the tidal cycle.</p> <p>Seasonal changes are also notable, particularly along the Ngunguru River with flowering plants such as pohutukawa, kowhai and native clematis providing seasonal displays.</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 	4	Limited accessibility to the Horahora portion of the unit, but also including Whareora lends these areas a strong remote feel. The margins of the Ngugnuru River tend to have a more domestic character, influenced by the presence of built development and the proximity of the settlement
<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	Linked with the spit, this area is highly valued by the local community and is afforded a strong sense of place.
<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>	5	<p>Consultation was initiated during the mapping process, but has not led to any feedback within the required period.</p> <p>The dunelands include a prehistoric Maori burial ground, which is reported to have been fenced in the past. The fence was no longer stock-proof in 1998.</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 north east along Ngunguru River to sand spit



View west to Whakeora