

Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

	Unit name – OCEAN BEACH
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
Land Types Ocean beach land type	Defined at the northern and southern ends by the elevated units of Kauri Mountain and Whangarei Heads, this unit is simple but dramatic, comprising a curving beach backed by sand dunes.
Geology (including geopreservation sites)	<p>Holocene coastal dunefield of fixed and active transverse dunes and dune blowouts, with two headlands of Lower Miocene subvolcanic intrusions (Coromandel Group) cutting melange of Cretaceous to Oligocene sedimentary units (Mangakahia and Motatau complexes) in the southern part of the site.</p> <p>Forested areas comprise coastal cliffs cut in Mesozoic greywacke and chert (Waipapa Group); melange of Cretaceous to Paleocene mudstone (Mangakahia Complex); and Lower Miocene andesitic dikes (Coromandel Group). Saltmarsh occupies valley floor wetland on Holocene alluvial deposits; remnant of formerly extensive Holocene swamp behind coastal dune belt. Freshwater wetlands occupy hollow on Holocene fixed sand dunes.</p>
Soil Types	Primarily comprising drifting or recently stabilized sands, the unit also includes pockets of Marsden sands, Ruakaka loamy peat, Rangiuru clay, Omaiko gravelly silt loam and Hukerenui silt loam on its landward side.
Ecology (including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)	<p>Ocean Beach is identified in the Manaia Ecological District PNAP report as Q07/075. The report ranks the feature as a Level 1 site with 1.7 ha forest, 258.6 ha duneland, 1.9 ha wetland, 7.1 ha estuarine, 0.7 rockland, however the landscape area that is the subject of this worksheet only focuses on the beach and a limited portion of the foredune.</p> <p>The site is of significance due to the presence of five 'At Risk' plant species and four regionally significant species. In addition, the site supports numerous species of birds, including four 'Threatened' and eight 'At Risk' species of seabird, as well as one 'Threatened' and two regionally significant reptile species, and one 'Threatened' invertebrate species.</p>
Archaeological sites	Pa sites are evident at the northern and southern ends of the beach.
Heritage Landscapes	None known.
Landscape characterisation (including the identification of any specific characteristics)	
<p>Ocean Beach extends for a distance of some 6.0 km between Bream Head and Tarakanahi at its southern extreme, to the stream outfall immediately to the south of Kauri Mountain in the north. These features provide containment for the beach which describes a shallow curve, broken only by two small 'knolls' near the southern end. In addition, the features also contribute to the feeling of naturalness and wildness.</p>	

The beach is backed by low dunes which in places forms a moderately extensive dunefield. Beyond this, the low lying land has been drained and modified for pasture. Viewed from the beach however, the foredune precludes views inland and focuses attention on the longer views along the beach, or towards the ocean.

The landscape has a powerful simplicity engendered by the limited palette of colours, and the scale and form of the beach. It possesses an exposed and open character.

Public access is only possible from the Whangarei Head settlement at the extreme south end, and from Kauri Mountain Road at the north end. Activity tends to focus around the settlement whilst the remainder of the beach retains a more remote and empty character.

Similarly, built development is focused at the southern end 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	Ocean Beach is a representative example of a Northland east coast ocean beach. The contextual landscape features Bream Head and Kauri Mountain provide a clear sense of place and distinguish the beach from other examples. The beach has strong endemic associations due to the native spinifex and other dune species present on the foredunes.
Rarity Natural features are unique or rare in the region or nationally, and few comparable examples exist.	5	The beach is similar in scale and character to a limited number of ocean beaches within the region, but retains its own character due to the beach backdrop dunelands and framing topographical features.
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	The beach and its immediate backdrop retain a high level of coherence as a result of the simplicity of the components, and form of the feature. There is only limited modification in terms of built form, and this is restricted to the southern end of the beach. The dunes are affected by exotic weeds, but retain a natural appearance.
Diversity & Complexity The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.	2	The beach and its setting display a limited degree of diversity and complexity, although the ocean tends to be a dynamic element which provides its own ever changing complexity to the landscape, against the simple foil of the beach.
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.	5	The simplicity of form and colour, and the scale of the beach and its interplay with the sky results in the feature being particularly striking and displaying a high level of vividness. The clarity of the water on sunny days is a significant component of the experience.
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. 	4	Whilst the backdrop to the beach has undergone a level of modification as a result on weed invasion, the beach and its immediate fore dune retain a high level of naturalness that is devoid of built development, and exotic vegetation, and maintains strong natural and coastal processes, both hydrological, and ecological.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 		<p>The settlement at the southern end is generally set back from the coastal edge and only influences the beach to a limited degree.</p>
<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>	3	<p>The beach and its immediate backdrop retain a coherence and intactness and does not show signs of modification. The backdrop to the beach does display a greater level of modification and this does, in places detract to some extent from the intactness of the landscape.</p>
Experiential Values		
<p>Expressiveness The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.</p>	5	<p>The beach clearly displays the coastal processes, which formed it and continue to shape it.</p>
<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	<p>The exposure and openness of the beach provides for a heightened sensory experience, whether on a windy winters day, or a still day in summer. The power and clarity of the waves and the colour of the water also add to this experience.</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>A number of transient values are evident on the beach, including changes evidenced the tides, by changing weather and the seasons, but also by the arrival and departure of migrating birds.</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>The beach is accessed from a limited number of locations at the north and south end. At the southern end the sense of remoteness is diminished by the presence of the settlement and proximity to the car park. The visitor is able to experience a greater level of remoteness, which increases as the distance from the access point increases.</p> <p>At the northern end of the beach where greater development has occurred the sense of remoteness and wildness has been diminished.</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>Ocean Beach is a widely recognised as a destination and a surfing location. It has a strong sense of place and is held in high public esteem.</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</p>		<p>Consultation was initiated during the mapping process, but has not led to any feedback within the required period.</p>

parts of a landscape, for example, popular walking routes or fishing spots.		
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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



Ocean Beach from look out



Ocean Beach looking south from end of Kauri Mountain Road