

# Northland Regional Landscape Assessment Worksheet

	Unit name – <b>TAIHARURU RIVER INLET</b>
DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISATION	
Component	Comment
<b>Land Types</b> Reefs and islands land type Estuarine / inlet land type	The shelter and enclosure displayed by the estuarine / inlet land type contrasts markedly with the adjoining exposed and sometimes wild reefs and islands land type.
<b>Geology</b> (including geopreservation sites)	Coastal hills of Waipapa Terrane greywacke adjoining the Taiharuru Estuary.
<b>Soil Types</b>	The soil type within the unit predominantly comprises Marua clay loam.
<b>Ecology</b> (including protected vegetation / features, PNAP Level 1 and 2 sites)	<p>Identified in the Whangaruru Ecological District PNAP report as Q07/009 (Taiharuru Estuary Remnants). The Level 1 site comprises 48 ha of forest and 32 ha of shrubland).</p> <p>The remnants contain a relatively high diversity of vegetation types, and are the few estuarine forest areas left on the Taiharuru Estuary.</p> <p>The remainder of the estuarine margin has been modified, and consists primarily of pasture. These remnants provide an important buffer function.</p> <p>The PNAP report states that the site is of significance due to the fact that this is a representative site for pohutukawa coastal forest type and due to the presence of a threatened land snail.</p>
<b>Archaeological sites</b>	There is evidence of pa sites on the eastern (coastal) side of the river and it is likely that the margins of the river were settled.
<b>Heritage Landscapes</b>	None known
<b>Landscape characterisation</b> (including the identification of any specific characteristics)	
<p>The Taiharuru River drains into the southern end of Ngunguru Bay. It drains a relatively small catchment defined by Kauri Mountain to the south and a low ridge traced by Pataua South Road to the north.</p> <p>Separated from the ocean by the narrow Taiharuru peninsula, the mouth of the estuary has a sheltered and enclosed character, created by the cluster of islands at the mouth of the estuary (Reparapahoa, Motungangara, Ipurau, and Otarawa), and by the contextual rocky inlet mouth. These elements buffer the estuary from the ocean and mark the transition from the rocky shoreline of the ocean coast to the calm of the river.</p> <p>The estuary is defined by low, often vegetated escarpments and hills particularly around the entry to the inlet. This contains the sweeping channel and extensive mangrove and saltmarsh in the mid and upper reaches. These and the extensive backshore flats in the upper reaches provide separation between the channel and neighbouring built development, including the Pataua South Road, which intersects with the river as it approaches Pataua South.</p> <p>The mid and upper part of the estuary displays a more open and rural character. The surrounding low pastured hills allow long views across the river, particularly from Taiharuru Road to the south.</p>	

<b>EVALUATION</b>		
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Natural Science Factors</b>		
<b>Representativeness</b> 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.	<b>5</b>	The river is characteristic of the sheltered inlets that punctuate the coast and include the Horahora, Ngunguru, Pataua, and Whananaki Rivers, and parts of the Whangarei Harbour. These features tend to extend some distance inland and share a sense of detachment from the open coastline with a strong degree of enclosure. Vegetation patterns are strongly representative of the coast, with pohutukawa being a dominant species.
<b>Rarity</b> Natural features are unique or rare in the region or nationally, and few comparable examples exist.	<b>4</b>	Although there are a number of local representative examples of the landscape type, these are definitive of this part of the eastern Northland coast and are rare in a national sense.
<b>Aesthetic Values</b>		
<b>Coherence</b> 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.	<b>4</b>	<p>The river mouth displays a strong degree of coherence with bold vegetation patterns, particularly where they clothe the steep escarpments along the edge of the river. In addition, the legible vegetation sequence between channel and terrestrial vegetation further contributes to the coherence of the landscape.</p> <p>There is only limited impact from built development around the river mouth due to the separation provided by topography and vegetation. A small bach settlement at the mouth of the river has limited impact on the coherence of the landscape.</p>
<b>Diversity &amp; Complexity</b> The elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony.	<b>5</b>	The vegetation associated with the landscape displays a high level of diversity and complexity.
<b>Vividness</b> 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.	<b>4</b>	Although the landscape lacks the drama of the ocean coast, the presence of the ocean provides contrast to the serenity of the river mouth and inlet. The sweep of the river channel, and the enclosure afforded by the vegetated escarpments, including the presence of pohutukawa, and the perception of isolation generates strong memorable qualities that is valued by the local community.
<b>Naturalness</b> How affected by human activity is the landscape? Does human activity intrude on the landscape? Eg. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of buildings and associated built development.</li> <li>• Presence of infrastructure services.</li> <li>• Extent of indigenous forest cover.</li> <li>• Homogeneity of exotic vegetation.</li> <li>• Presence / extent of modified agricultural land use.</li> <li>• Strength of natural processes / ecological patterns.</li> <li>• Unmodified and legible</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>	The mouth and mid portion of the river displays moderate levels of naturalness. Within the wider context of the river catchment, however vegetation clearance for pasture has resulted in a marked decline in the strength of natural processes, and a reduction in the appearance of naturalness, it is the vegetated river margins that are included within the landscape.

<p>physical relief and landform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of water.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Intactness</b></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>	<b>2</b>	The landscape comprises a relatively narrow strip along the margin of the river. Whilst this strip appears moderately intact, it lacks the wider connections necessary for fully functioning natural processes. It does, however lend the river corridor an appearance of intactness.
<b>Experiential Values</b>		
<p><b>Expressiveness</b></p> <p>The 'legibility' of the landscape. Natural features clearly demonstrate the natural processes that formed them.</p>	<b>4</b>	The dramatic sweep of the river, its enclosed and sheltered character with vegetated escarpment edges is highly legible. The river clearly demonstrates its natural formative processes.
<p><b>Sensory qualities</b></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>	<b>5</b>	With a tranquil and largely isolated character, the river provides a strong sense of place. River estuaries have a particular smell and this smell is evident at the mouth and mid portion of the river. In addition, during stormy weather, the waves breaking on the sheltering islands and nearby rocky coast adds to the sense of drama.
<p><b>Transient Values</b></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>	<b>4</b>	Daily changes resulting from tidal movements are a regular and dramatic occurrence, which markedly changes the character of the river. The flowering of kowhai and native clematis are a striking seasonal visible occurrence along the river edge.
<p><b>Remoteness / Wildness</b></p> <p>Does the landscape display a wilderness character, remote from and untouched by human presence?</p> <p>Eg.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of remoteness</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Distance from built development</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>	The river possesses a sense of peace and remoteness although it is close to scattered built development and the river mouth is accessible by road. Built development is visible – most notably located near the river mouth – but this has little influence on the mid sections of the river.
<p><b>Shared and recognised values</b></p> <p>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>	<b>5</b>	The Taiharuru and neighbouring Pataua River are valued by the community for their scenic and natural values. This is evidenced by the activities of the Whangarei Heads Landcare Forum which is an active group that takes an interest in the health and enhancement of the catchments of these rivers.
<p><b>Spiritual, cultural and historical associations</b></p> <p>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>		Consultation was initiated during the mapping process, but has not led to any feedback within the required period.

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



Taiharuru River



Taiharuru River entrance from the end of Taiharuru Road