DRAFTRESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

KAI IWI LAKES (TAHAROA DOMAIN) 2015









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INTRODUCTION

This Kai Iwi Lakes (Taharoa Domain) Reserve Management Plan 2015 has been developed to provide strategic guidance to the custodianship and enhancement of Taharoa Domain (an area commonly known as Kai Iwi Lakes). The reserve covers an area of some 538 ha and contains three dune waterbodies: Lake Taharoa, Lake Kai Iwi and Lake Waikare.

Dune lakes

Kaipara District has a number of dune lakes associated with the length of its western coastline. These form part of a wider sequence that runs from Aupouri to Pouto Peninsula. The Kai Iwi Lakes are part of this lake system and are arguably amongst the best known dune lakes in New Zealand.

Lakes Taharoa, Waikare and Kai lwi are all ranked as outstanding!. Lake Taharoa, the largest of the three lakes and deepest (37m) in Northland receives the most activity due to its size, with a number of recreational activities occurring. Lake Taharoa has been recognised as 'probably the best example of a clear-water lake in Northland with the deepest recorded (24m) submerged vegetation in Northland'².

Like most dune lakes, the Taharoa Domain waterbodies have little or no continuous surface inflows or outlets, being primarily fed directly by rainfall or by groundwater from the surrounding catchment. As a result, water levels fluctuate to reflect climatic patterns.

Lake Waikare has historically been the base for formalised water skiing activities; Lake Taharoa is the focus of camping and much of the Domain's recreational pursuits; whilst Lake Kai Iwi, as the smallest of the three lakes, provides for very little active recreational use. Each lake has its own individual characteristics, but they have a collective identity that shapes an outstanding natural environment.



¹ Northern Lakes Ecological Status 2013. NIWA

² Ibid.

Collectively the lakes support a spectrum of endangered endemic species, providing one of only a few remaining known habitats or strongholds for a range of biota. Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the lakes is a currently limited impact of invasive species on the lakes' biota. They are highly complex and sensitive ecosystems that need collective assessment and monitoring programmes to take into consideration human activity and the interactions between the lakes physical environment and the biological communities that live within them. These matters are central to a continued healthy and outstanding natural feature and for the benefit and enjoyment of those who interact with it.

Taharoa Domain

The Domain is legally held as Crown land and its administration is currently vested in Kaipara District Council. It lies some 30km to the northwest of Dargaville, 2km inland of the west coast Tasman Sea and 30km south of Waipoua.



An aerial view of the Domain and surrounding terrain. Source: Google Earth.

Taharoa Domain is an iconic place, boasting a fascinating cultural history, outstanding landscape values, a fast-recovering ecology and water quality that is amongst the highest of any dune lakes in New Zealand. Collectively these characteristics give the Domain a distinctive identity that is unmatched elsewhere in the country.

The lakes provide a much-loved destination for day visitors and campers, with many families having a relationship with the Domain that goes back to the early times of its formation as a reserve. It is not uncommon for camping groups to consist of three generations staying together.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

For as long as has been recorded, people have lived in and around what is known today as Kai Iwi Lakes (Taharoa Domain). It is thought that the first Maori ancestor associated with the lakes is Tuputupu Whenua (alias Tumutumu Whenua) who dwelt at Rangirerekura Pa in the nearby Waihopai Valley. The Waihopai Valley at this time provided an ideal settlement for early Maori, as it was rich in resources. Tuputupu Whenua's 16th century Te Roroa descendent, Ngaengae, is believed to have lived in the same pa and is known to have fished in the lakes, as did his son Rangiwhatuma and his grandson Ikataora.

By the 1870's, the Kai Iwi area had become a major gum digging area, with the largest gum digging camp was located at Johnsons's Swamp, south of Lake Kai Iwi³. Gum digging expanded to include to the eastern shores of Lake Taharoa and supported a general store that was established at Pine Beach in 1892. In the 1920's there was approximately 100 people said to have lived on the shores of the lakes and most were gum diggers. Around this time there were various attempts to extend gum retrieval in the area and flax was harvested as a local industry.

An extensive tract of land known as the Maunganui Block was sold to the Crown in 1876 by the Chiefs Tiopira Kinaki and Parore Te Awha. Subsequently, a small 250 acre portion of that area which was centred on Lake Kai lwi was cut out the wider area that had been purchased and granted back to Parore Te Awha to provide for perpetual access to food resources, protect important sites and provide a sheltered place to live. This parcel became known as the Taharoa Native Reserve and was to become the subject of a Treaty of Waitangi claim after it was sold to the Crown in 1950 without the involvement of Parore's descendants.



An 8.5ha block of land on the eastern shore of Lake Taharoa was set aside as a scenic reserve in 1928. The Crown then purchased Taharoa Native Reserve from the legal Maori owners in 1950, but in so doing was later judged to have breached the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi by the Waitangi Tribunal. Surrounding land was added to the scenic reserve in 1952, followed a decade later by Lake Kai Iwi being added to the reserve. In that same year, land around Lake Taharoa and Kai Iwi was gazetted as the Taharoa Domain Recreation Reserve.

1964 saw the first plantation forestry in the Domain, with the planting of 10,000 pine seedlings. Forestry operations continued until mid-2000's. It was also in 1964 that recreational use of the Domain started to be

³ Taharoa Domain Reserve Management Plan (1987) Dunn, M.J. Hobson County Council



promoted. Lake Waikare became popular for water-skiing during this period and a water-ski club was established in the late 1960's.

Lake Waikare was added to Taharoa Domain Recreation Reserve in 1968 and in that same year administration and control of the reserve was entrusted to Hobson County Council (now Kaipara District Council).through the Taharoa Domain Board which was formed under the Reserves and Domains Act (1953) 1968 also saw a survey of Lakes Kai Iwi and Taharoa by the Departments of Marine and Internal Affairs, which found conditions in the lakes favourable for the 10,000 rainbow trout fingerlings that were then released into Lake Taharoa later that year. Trout were introduced to Lake Waikare the following year and trout fishing at the Domain commenced.



Lake Taharoa in 1966, Whites Aviation Ltd: Photographs. Ref: WA-66060-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. http://natlib.govt.nz/records/22587705

The 1970's was a busy time for development in the domain, with the roading and amenity blocks seen today being established. Amenity improvements continued into the early 1980's to cater for increasing numbers of day-trippers and campers who were being drawn to the lakes.

During 1986 the first of a number of Treaty of Waitangi claims was lodged on behalf of Te Roroa and this included Taharoa Native Reserve within its scope. The Waitangi Tribunal addressed the claim in a report

released in 1992, which judged that there were breaches of the Treaty in the way that the purchase of that Native Reserve was conducted and recommending a number of avenues of redress.

Taharoa Domain received its first reserve management Plan in 1987, when the then Hobson County prepared a document in response to the requirements of the Reserves Act (1977). The gravel road that connected Kai lwi Lakes Road with Pine Beach was sealed in the 1990's, leading to a further increase in visitor numbers.

A review of the 1987 reserve management plan began in 1999, concluding with the second Taharoa Domain Reserve Management Plan being adopted in 2002. Three years later a new wastewater plant was installed at Pine Beach. A further two years elapsed before all of the pines established from 1964 onwards were harvested and major habitat restoration works began. Those ecological initiatives have continued to the present, with an increasing focus upon managing plant and animal pests, along with a number of research initiatives. Improvements to 1970's-era amenities around the Pine Beach area and the beginnings of a comprehensive upgrading of the Domain's tracks (as signalled by the 2002 Reserve Management Plan) have been progressing during 2015. A review of the 2002 Reserve Management Plan was initiated in 2013, leading to the preparation of this document.



MANAGING THREATS

Taharoa Domain has seen some significant changes in its management over the years. In early times much of the perimeter of the lakes was grazed and that use perpetuated through to the 1980s. Extensive forestry was established during the late 1960s and harvesting has occurred over the past 20 years, sometimes with dramatic effects. That impact is now healing and a new phase has commenced where restoring the natural ecology of the lakes and their setting has become a primary focus.

Growing populations of people, particularly in Auckland, and constant improvements in transportation will inevitably lead to increasing user numbers and associated pressures. A significant challenge is to ensure that the outstanding status of all three lakes within Taharoa Domain is conserved as demand grows. Amongst the goals of this reserve management plan is to significantly enhance the qualities of the Domain whilst addressing use pressures.

The aquatic environment of the lakes is particularly vulnerable, with a potential for aggressive exotic species to be accidentally introduced and to then rapidly colonise the lakes. Threats to water quality from the wider catchment that influences the lakes is another significant matter. Reducing the risks and the likelihood of damage to water quality and aquatic ecology requires proactive management will involve a number of

organisations. There is a need to identify potential and pathway risks along with developing measures aimed at risk reduction (particularly education), surveillance, incursion response, readiness and monitoring. Continuing to build knowledge about the natural resources and processes that influence the Lakes will allow a fuller understanding of both the characteristics of the waterbodies and the ways those could be compromised.

The Domain's terrestrial environment faces a comparable suite of threats, many of which are already well-established. Addressing those land-based environmental challenges also requires scientifically-based programmes and monitoring which are supported with ongoing commitment.

It is the intention of the Taharoa Domain Governance Committee to implement actions within the Reserve Management Plan that enable the Domain and its environment to be enjoyed by all visitors while simultaneously enhancing the area and reducing risks though knowledge and active management.



Centrolepis strigosa at shore of Lake Waikare. Current conservation status: 2012 - threatened - nationally critical, still seasonally abundant at Kai Iwi Lakes. Photograph by Lisa Forester NRC 2014-10-13

CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS

The first Maori ancestor probably associated with the lakes is Tuputupu Whenua (alias Tumutumu Whenua), whose name means a sprout from the land. He dwelt at Rangirerekura Pa in the nearby Waihopai Valley close to the fishing grounds at Maunganui Bluff, the mussel and toheroa beds of Ripriro Beach, the swamps and kumara gardens of the Waihopai Valley and the eels of the Ngakiriparauri Stream and the lakes. The Waihopai Valley provided an ideal resource rich settlement for early Maori. Tuputupu Whenua's probably 16th century Te Roroa descendent, Ngaengae lived in the same pa and is known to have made use of to the lakes for fishing purposes, as did his son Rangiwhatuma and the latter's son Ikataora.

A close, long-standing relationship with the lakes and surrounding land leads to Maori regarding them as a taonga (treasure) and important food source. They have fished, lived in the area around the lakes, and buried their dead there. Two urupa (burial grounds) are known to exist and a pa site overlooks Lake Kai lwi from just outside the legal boundaries of the reserve.

The Taharoa Native Reserve was defined in an effort to conserve iwi access to the Lakes when broader land holdings were sold by local Maori.



Evidence presented in relation to the Te Roroa claim (Wai 38) paints an engaging picture of early life⁴. Mr Te Rore tells of packs of 18 horses following the Ngakiriparauri Track between the lakes and Kaihu carrying loads of kauri gum to load onto the train. The importance of the Taharoa eel fishery is acknowledged, being known to complement mussels and toheroa that were gathered from the nearby coast.

Life around the gum kainga (village) was relayed to Mr Te Rore by kuia, who spoke of large nikau-clad "dance houses", where the ground was levelled, kauri gum dust spread and set to burn. The melted gum then hardened to form a smooth and durable dance floor. Mr Te Rore describes how rama, kauri splinter torches, were constructed in readiness for tuna (eel) fishing expeditions. Another preparation was felling and splitting ti kouka (cabbage trees). The very white wood was laid in the floor of the drain so that the passing eels could be seen against that pale background in the night. This technique was described as being "our x-ray".

Evidence by Mr Eruera Makoare to the same hearing focussed particularly upon eeling activities at the lakes, with the bounty providing for Kaihu people. Eeling was particularly directed toward the historic drain between Lakes Kai Iwi and Taharoa, and selected shallow spots on the margins of the lakes. In good times up to 50 eels of 4.5-5 feet in length would be caught in a single evening. Lake Kai Iwi was known as being the best of the lakes for catching eels. Mr Makoare talks of young people approaching him to teach them the traditional eeling methods.

Settlers of Dalmatian origin were amongst the first Europeans to have an association with the area, forming relationships with local Maori and devoting their energy to digging kauri gum. Unfortunately there is little documented history of this period, but a number of small, gnarled grape vines at Pine Beach and Promenade Point are thought to be part of the Dalmatian legacy.



⁴ Te Rore, T, R (Lovey). Statement of Evidence in relation to a claim by E D Nathan and ors. Te Roroa claim Wai 38





TREATY OF WAITANGI CLAIM

Tangata whenua's long-standing relationship with Taharoa Domain and the wider surrounding area has been varied and on-going. This status was recognised in a Treaty of Waitangi claim that included land embodied in the Domain. In numerous places in its report The Waitangi Tribunal recognised that the Kai lwi lakes were, and still are, an essential mahinga kai for tangata whenua⁵. As a result of its findings, the Tribunal recommended:

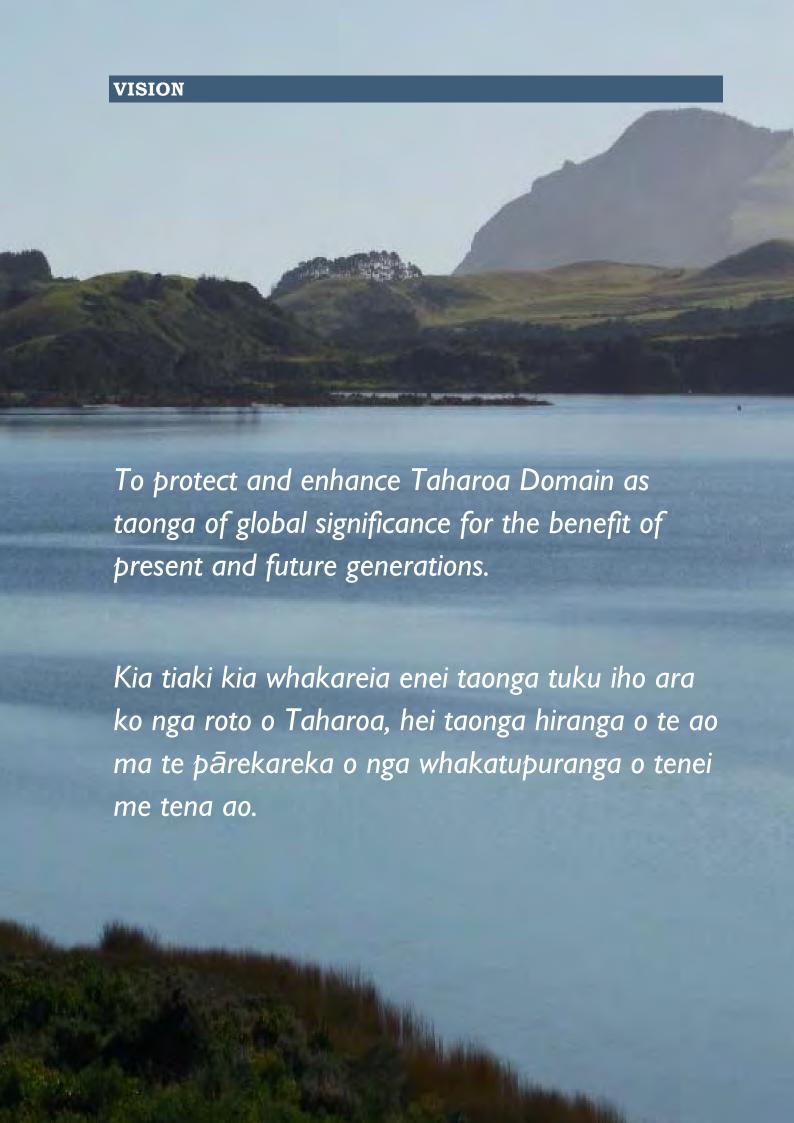
That the 250 acre Taharoa Native Reserve, granted as from 8 February 1876 to Parore Te Awha, be restored "as wahi tapu, papakainga and mahinga kai for tangata whenua" as originally intended.

That recommendation is supported both by tangata whenua and the Office of Treaty Settlements in relation to Taharoa Domain. The Tribunal also acknowledged that there are wahi tapu in and around the Reserve, leading to a recommendation for the participation of tangata whenua with Council in the management of the reserve. In response, Kaipara District Council voluntarily established co-governance arrangements that provide for the active and equal decision making that tangata whenua have with Local Government representatives on the Taharoa Domain Governance Committee.



⁵ The Te Roroa Report 1992. Waitangi Tribunal. Ministry of Justice





AIM 1: COLLABORATION

Local government and tangata whenua will co-govern Taharoa, and inspire others to share in its care.



OBJECTIVES

- To have effective co-governance arrangements that reflect the active and equal decision-making of Local Government and tangata whenua.
- To develop a "family" of participants who are committed to working with us to optimise the values of the Domain.
- To establish opportunities for the Domain to be a source of cultural and environmental education (possibly through the development of an education facility).

PROPOSED ACTIONS

- Committee terms of reference are updated ready for the 2016-2019 term of Council.
- A volunteer programme is in place.
- A 10-year communication plan is in place.
- A feasibility study for "Taharoa Education Centre" is completed.
- The co governance arrangement is adapted as may be necessary to be reflective of the primary parties who are committed to the ongoing health and wellbeing of the Domain.





AIM 2: CULTURAL

The relationships of tangata whenua and other peoples, their history, culture and traditions will be reflected and acknowledged in how Taharoa is developed and cared for.

OBJECTIVES

- To protect the cultural dimension of the Domain as a fundamental part of its identity and meaning, including the protection of wahi tapu and archaeological sites.
- To recognise, respect and enhance the cultural and spiritual dimensions of the Domain and inform visitors of their importance.
- To manage Taharoa Domain holistically as one ecological and cultural system.
- To restore the aquatic and terrestrial ecological systems to natural, indigenous biota, including restoration of traditional kai.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

- All archaeological and wahi tapu sites are identified and have protection in place.
- An interpretation plan is completed and significant sites have signage that tells their story.
- There is a work programme in place and its progress monitored for the restoration of natural, indigenous biota and kai.





AIM 3: ENVIRONMENT

Complete knowledge about Taharoa will enable effective protection and enhancement of its natural environment and pristine waters.



OBJECTIVES

- To improve the knowledge we have of Taharoa its natural ecologies, and the influences and risks to its values and pristine waters and make this knowledge widely available, including interpretative signage, annual State of the Environment reporting and a website.
- To use this knowledge to strengthen the integrity and resilience of the natural ecologies and water quality, and engage neighbours to minimise the risk of potentially harmful groundwater reaching Taharoa Domain.
- To implement an ongoing programme of habitat restoration including integrated weed and pest management, and fire protection.
- To use Taharoa, its lakes and surrounds to sustain vulnerable indigenous species by reestablishing appropriate habitats and conditions.
- To improve the knowledge of native and exotic fish stocks in the lakes, reviewing the release of exotic fish (trout) into Taharoa and Waikare and the impacts of discontinuing this practice.
- To pro-actively manage the lakes based on scientific research and analysis and on-going monitoring programmes developed with key stakeholder organisations.

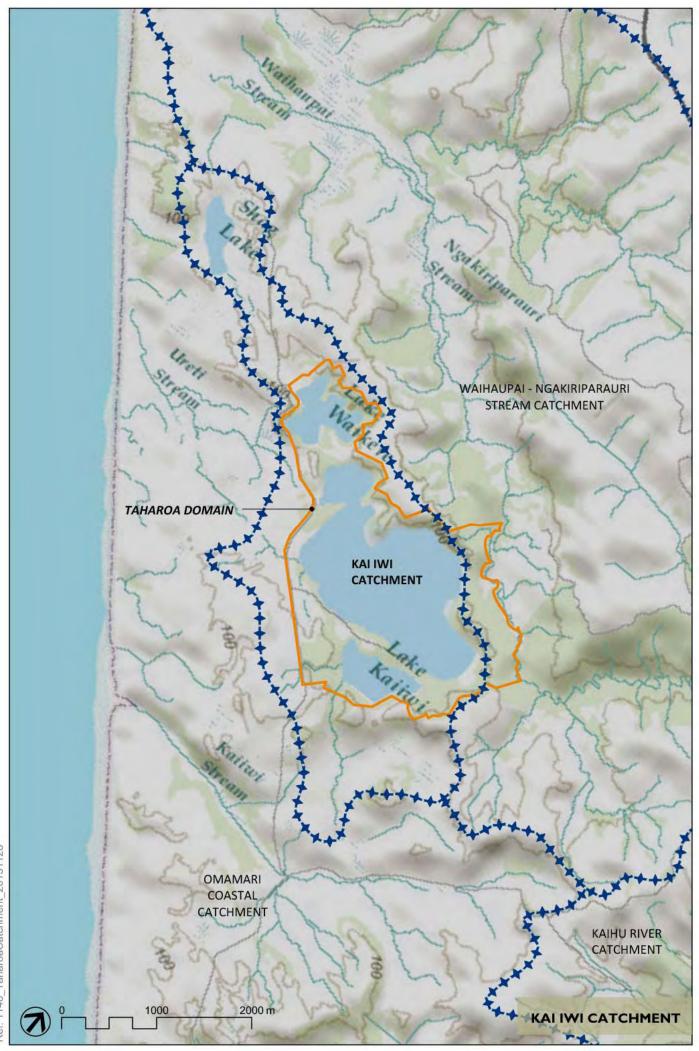


- Research and data collation programme scoped and in place with progress monitored.
- Make available research results to the public via a website and information signage at Taharoa Domain.
- Protection and enhancement of the natural environment and pristine waters will be planned and initiated and updated as more knowledge becomes available. This will involve neighbours.
- A detailed Fire Management Plan is in place for Taharoa Domain.
- Exotic fish releases are reviewed and if deemed detrimental to the ecology and health of native fish, ceased in all lakes by 2018.

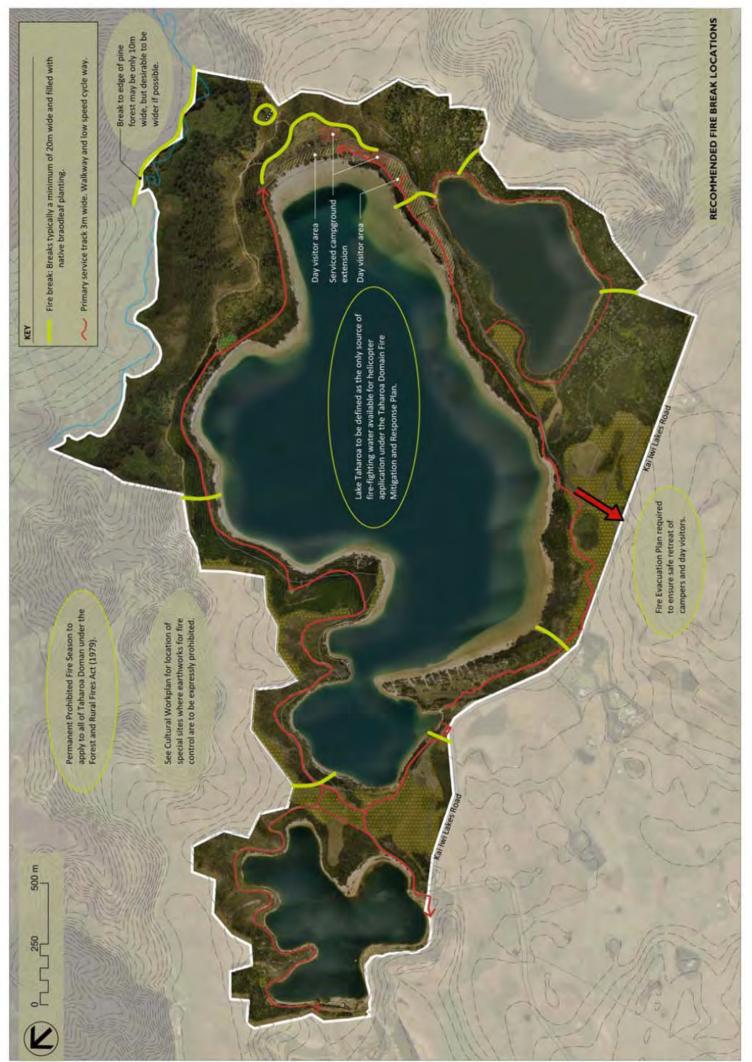


• Powerboats will not be allowed from 2018, unless specifically authorised as safety vessels for events, for scientific and research purposes, or for management operations.





Ref: 1148 TaharoaCatchment 20151128



A diverse range of recreational activities which are compatible with the cultural and ecological values of Taharoa, will be available for all visitors.



OBJECTIVES

- To optimise visitors' experiences and enjoyment through the development of recreational opportunities (active and passive) which heighten appreciation of the natural and cultural characteristics of Taharoa without compromising its values.
- To position Taharoa to act as a hub for wider walking and cycling linkages.
- To manage the effects of all visitors on the environment through the appropriate design of the landscape and infrastructure.



- To encourage a wide range of social, cultural and sporting events which are compatible with the Domain's environmental and cultural characteristics, whilst ensuring that these do not result in exclusive use.
- To reduce conflicting water based activities and enhancing the appeal of the domain as a
 destination for passive and non-motorised recreation activities e.g. rowing, sailing, kayaking,
 waka ama, cycling, walking, swimming, paddleboarding etc.
- To improve safety within the Domain and on the lakes by having clear rules, guidelines and information that relate to the activities, coupled with active education.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

• Completion of a landscape and infrastructure plan to effectively manage visitor needs, with monitoring of its implementation.



- Completion of business case, and consequential development of new visitor facilities including camping.
- Complete a plan for extended and new walking and cycling track networks with monitoring of implementation.
- Actively improve and promote safety education within the domain with appropriate signage at key points along with monitoring of lake users.
- Develop, over time, an annual events programme with event organisers appropriate to the values of the place.
- Close Promenade Point campground by mid-2018.



- Day visitor toilet facilities are provided at key destination points.
- Playgrounds are updated to meet safety requirements and better fit with the Domain's natural character.
- Picnic facilities are upgraded to achieve a better fit with the atmosphere of Taharoa Domain, including amenity planting and provision for shade.
- The entrance to the Domain is reconfigured to improve visitor arrival experience.



- A business case is completed, and implemented if appropriate, for a Domain Manager's residence and adjacent work yard.
- Powerboats will not be allowed from 2018, unless specifically authorised as safety vessels for events, scientific and research purposes, and for management operations.
- Water craft launching facilities are limited to a single defined point at Lake Taharoa and Lake Waikare.
- Biosecurity checking bay/s are developed and supported by related information at each launching point.





AIM 5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Kai Iwi Lakes (Taharoa Domain) will be promoted and developed as an educational, scientific and tourist destination.

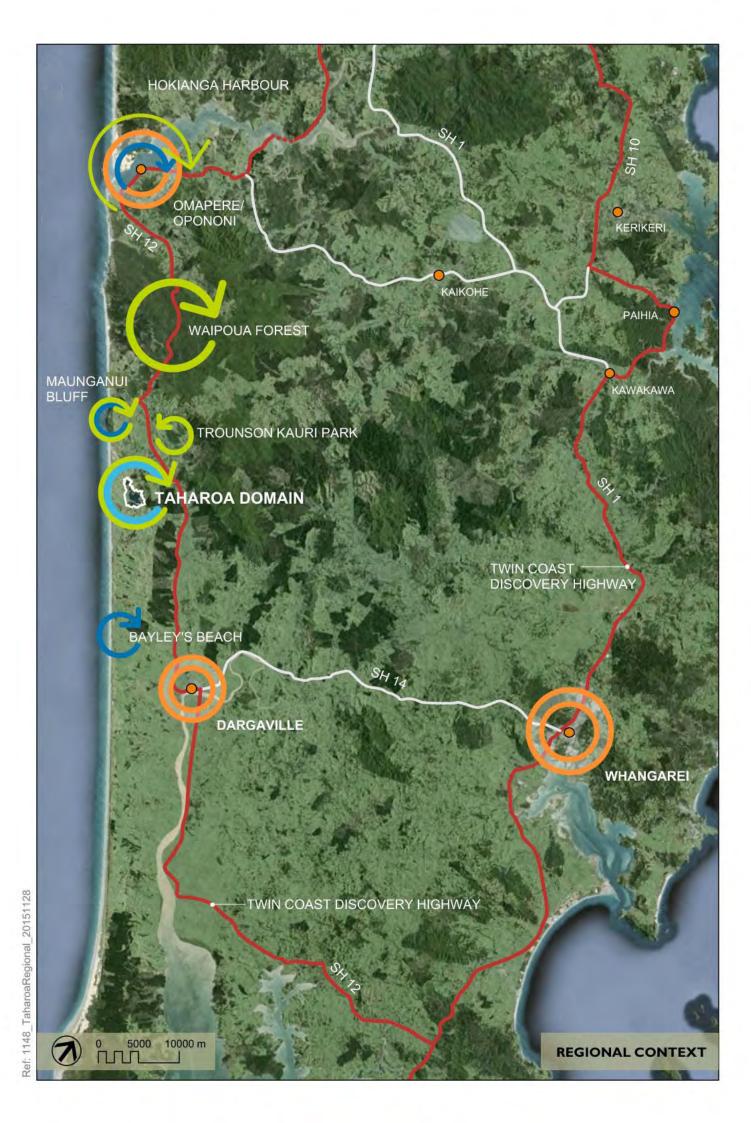


OBJECTIVES

- To promote Kai lwi Lakes widely as a passive and active recreation visitor attraction.
- To develop Taharoa so that it offers attractions which are used throughout the year.
- To develop services and facilities to attract visitors from education and science sectors.
- To re-establish Taharoa Domain's natural flora and fauna as the centre piece to its economic development and sustainability.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

- A promotional strategy is completed and implemented to reinforce Taharoa Domain's reputation as a destination, sitting alongside allied local attractions like Waipoua Forest (The Kauri Coast Experience).
- Digital media is being effectively applied to evocatively portray the values of Taharoa Domain.
- An Infrastructure Development Plan is completed to include design and feasibility assessment for new/extended visitor facilities (including accommodation) and recreational opportunities to generate a wider spread of use and revenues throughout the seasons.
- Production forestry practices are discontinued and replaced with a focus upon restoration and re-vegetation of the Domain.





Ref. 1148 TaharoaTracknet 20151128

AIM 6: RESOURCING

The Domain and its promotion will be managed in a way that encourages a spectrum of resources that support its stewardship.



OBJECTIVES

- To increase revenues from sources other than Council.
- To manage the finances in a business-like manner including an annual business plan and budget.
- To encourage sponsorship and partnerships which contribute resources in cash and/or kind.
- To develop and manage the campground to achieve improved revenue.
- To establish concession arrangements that are assessed for alignment with the Taharoa Domain Reserve Management Plan and related work plans.



- A strategy is in place to pursue funding from other agencies and is actively implemented.
- Expected performance (financial and non-financial) is well-documented with performance monitored against targets.
- A comprehensive business plan is established, monitored and adjusted on an annual basis.
- Sponsors, other funding agencies and volunteers are involved in a range of initiatives.
- Camp fees are reviewed and benchmarked against comparable facilities elsewhere in Northland.
- The campground is achieving improved occupancy, including outside of peak season.
- Concession/s are well established and providing an optimal service after paying a respectable fee
 that is reinvested in the Domain.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The legislative impetus for preparing a reserve management plan is contained in the Reserves Act 1977. That statute requires that a management plan shall provide for and ensure the use, enjoyment, maintenance, protection and preservation of the reserve, along with providing for development where resources are available. Management plans are expected to be kept under continuous review to adapt to changing circumstances or increased knowledge. In the case of *this* management plan, most of that adaptation is expected to be accommodated amongst the detail of the allied work plans.

Taharoa Domain is classified as a recreation reserve under the Act and it is considered that this status continues to best cater for the widespread recreational use of the reserve whilst also acknowledging the importance of managing and protecting natural and cultural values.



The land-use within Taharoa Domain is defined by the Kaipara District Plan and Northland Regional Council's plans (the Regional Water and Soil Plan for Northland in relation to Taharoa Domain) and policy statement. Those documents contain a number of provisions which influence the management development of Taharoa Domain, particularly in relation to its status as an outstanding landscape, its natural character, social and cultural values and water quality. Activities like earthworks, vegetation clearance, construction of buildings, and changes within or near water bodies are controlled as a result.

The Conservation Act 1987 details conservation and wildlife management responsibilities. This legislation makes provision for other organisations to manage sports fish and game, and sets requirements for related management plans covering those recreational resources. The Act requires those plans to have regard to matters of sustainability and the effect that the activity may have on other natural resources.



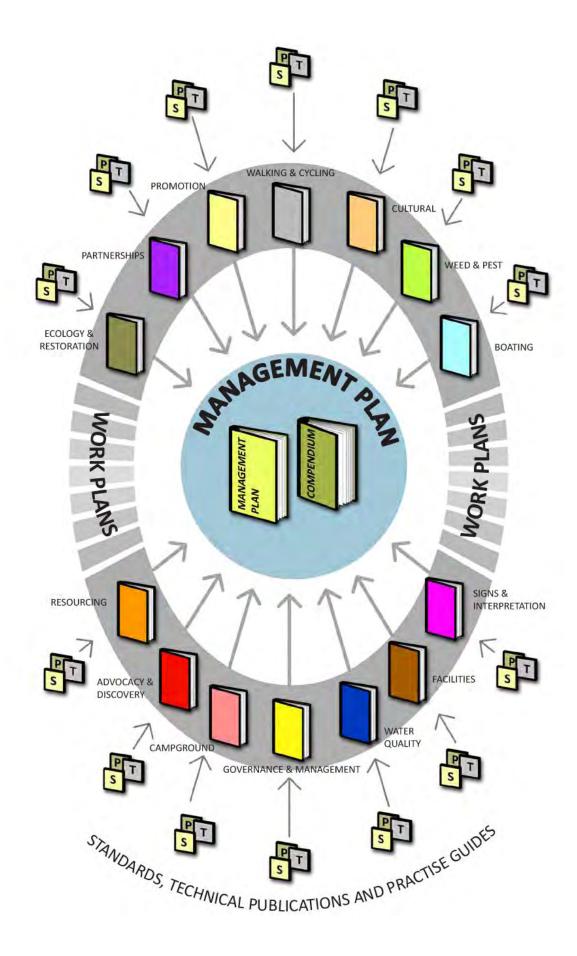
ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Reserves Act 1977 anticipates that management plans will be under continuous review in response to improved knowledge or changing circumstances. It is expected that the outcomes contained in this Plan, in particular, will require adjustment over time as tasks are achieved and directions refined. The Aims and Objectives set out are predicted to remain relevant, but may require refinement or supplementing. Actions will change as they are achieved.

Any comprehensive review or significant adjustment to the reserve management plan will require the processes set out in s.41 of the Reserves Act to be followed.

The 14 allied work plans which are listed further below are deliberately configured to be dynamic and evolving. The work plans are similar to what is commonly referred to as "asset management plans" and are outside the formal process defined by the Reserves Act 1977. Their role as both an informing resource and an operational tool enables them to perpetuate beyond the life of this Plan. They provide background and technical information and offer practical guidance upon how the strategic direction of the Plan can be achieved. They also provide the focus and detail to enable a robust Taharoa Domain Business Plan to be developed and facilitate implementation of an Annual Work Programme.





Relationship between RMP and the 14 work plans,





Advocacy and Discovery



Boating and Water-based Activity



Campground



Cultural



Ecology and Restoration



Facilities



Governance and Management



Partnerships



Promotion



Resourcing



Signs and Interpretation



Walking and Cycling



Water Quality



Weed and Pest