

PEST FREE IS THE WAY TO BE A NORTHERN GEM COMBINES CONSERVATION, RECREATION & FARMING

AUCKLAND
DESIGN MANUAL

TE PŪKA WHAKA-Ā-IRANGA I A TĀMOKI MĀKĀURAU

PARKS // LANDSCAPE & AMENITY CASE STUDY

Tawharanui Regional Park
Warkworth, Auckland

OVERVIEW

This large peninsular 'mainland island' has been treasured and enhanced, making it arguably one of Auckland's most beautiful and beloved regional parks.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Set on a prominent peninsula in the northern Hauraki Gulf, Tawharanui boasts some of Auckland's most beautiful white sand beaches, rolling pastures, shingled bays, native forest and regenerating wetlands.

Tawharanui Regional Park is 588ha area of which 170ha is farmed with sheep and cattle. The park includes diverse coastal forest, wetlands and coastal dune ecosystems. These areas provide important habitat for re-introduced species and are the model for restoration programs within the park. The beautiful coastal forest features kauri and rimu on the ridges, and puriri, taraire, tawa, rewarewa and nikau in the valleys. Magnificent stands of pohutukawa forest are found on coastal cliffs.

A large campground caters for tents and campervans and there is a network of tracks to explore. A Marine Reserve, established in September 2011, covers much of the northern coastline.

The Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society (TOSSI) was formed as a restoration group in 2002. Along with Auckland Council, the society's goal is to conserve the heritage assets of the area and to create a multi-purpose farm, recreation park and wildlife reserve. TOSSI are a community based organisation with charitable status and have been a huge success, contributing much value and improvements to the park over time.

For more information about Tawharanui, please visit the Auckland Council website.



KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

MAIN ENVIRONMENT MODULE LANDSCAPE & AMENITY

KEY FEATURES

LESSONS LEARNT

LOCATION

TAKATU RD, WARKWORTH

OTHER ENVIRONMENT MODULE INFORMAL RECREATION, ECOLOGICAL, HISTORIC HERITAGE

Mainland island sanctuary
Man-made lagoon
Campground & Bach

A farming operation that is open to the public, with around 1000 sheep and 90 cattle.

Marine reserve – most of the northern coastline is in a marine reserve that extends around 900m out to sea

Plant life – a large tract of mature native bush dominates the centre and north eastern ends of the park, including puriri trees, kauri, and nikau palms, which can be observed on the ecology trail

Walkway trails, beaches, toilets, picnic tables

Limited mobility facilities including: parking, toilets and picnic areas

Access – There could be some controls put in place to prevent coastal erosion and dune damage, and protect nesting bird areas from being trampled. This could easily be achieved with designated walkways.

Road Layouts – The layout of the main access road could have been more sensitively integrated through some areas, in particular one section which dissects a wetland area.

Walkways – Several walkways are unformed, marked only with coloured bollards which are spaced too far apart to effectively indicate the right way to go, leading to confusion and ‘feeling lost’ for many park users.

SITE AREA **588 HECTARES**

Finger of land projecting into the Hauraki Gulf from the east coast of the larger North Auckland Peninsula.

TREASURE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Clear and concise signage at the entrance helps to gain visitors' support of the strategy to protect the 'mainland island'.
2. Information kiosks inside the entrance and in other strategic locations help to further inform visitors about the purpose and benefits of a 'mainland island'.
3. A pest proof fence has allowed this park to function as a 'mainland island'. A number of rare and endangered species have been reintroduced as a result of pest management strategies.



Tawharanui is now a mainland island, which was created with the addition of a 2.5 km pest-proof fence installed in 2004 to protect the park from pests. An aerial drop of poison in 2004 eliminated black rats, brown rats, feral cats, possums, weasels, stoats and ferrets, allowing native flora and fauna to flourish.

TREASURE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Marine reserves can protect and ensure the long term enjoyment of our natural environments, particularly those with the intrinsic and economic opportunities offered by snorkelling and scuba diving.
2. Interpretation and maps of the protected areas improve understanding of the relationship between the two, and promote greater use and appreciation of the area.
3. Joining marine reserves with the Tawharnui mainland island provides a continuous ecological connection between the marine and terrestrial environments.



Tawharanui has retained areas of natural or undeveloped landscape, vegetation and habitat. These undeveloped places serve many important purposes, including: preserving the natural character of the landscape, providing habitats for endangered species and providing the public with access to unspoiled open spaces.

TREASURE OUR COMMUNITIES

1. This information centre creates a place for people to meet and plan their visit, and offers wayfinding and interpretive information.
2. The building also provides a warm and dry place of shelter during spells of bad weather.
3. Pictorial panels and information boards are provided as educational tools.



This building provides opportunities for the public to learn about the park. By educating park users about the traditional or historic use of the land through interpretive signage, people are better able to appreciate its special qualities and its significance within the wider Auckland landscape.

TREASURE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Sanitation stations help to reduce the spread of fungal diseases such as Kauri dieback, a threat to one of our unique native species. The effectiveness of stations relies heavily on maintenance and public information and cooperation.
2. Well signposted trails reduce the need for well formed paths as a means of way finding, which is particularly useful for trails through working fields in farm parks. Careful attention needs to be paid to the spacing of these signposts, as ones which are too far apart can create confusion for first-time visitors.
3. Simple signposting within the regional park helps visitors follow a particular trail suited to their timeframe or physical ability.



Tawharanui has successfully implemented weed and pest management measures, and proactive threatened species management schemes, such as this kauri dieback prevention station. By incorporating interpretive signage, park users are able to better understand and value the park's special natural environments, and are more likely to do their part to help protect them.

CONNECT PEOPLE & PLACES

1. Information centres create an ideal focal point to meet, learn, plan and shelter, particularly for school groups and trampers.
2. Allowing a small area for parking could mitigate traffic and maintenance implications, environmental issues and allow for greater use by school groups and bus trips.
3. Carriageway and path construction methods should consider the type and frequency of usage, maintenance issues and costs, as well as whether it can support buses and large vehicles.



This information centre provides a central meeting place, and a place for people to learn more about the park and how to access the places that are of particular interest to them. The roads connect people to their destinations, whilst still retaining the rural character of the park.

TREASURE OUR HERITAGE

1. A network of fencing enables the regional park to function as a productive farm, while protecting native flora and fauna in less exposed terrain.
2. Farm access roads also provide trails of a comfortable width and gradient for walkers.
3. Stiles and kissing gates allow people to pass through the fields without compromising the containment of livestock, offering a unique rural experience for the public.



Tāwharanui was developed as a farm by the Martin, Jones and Young families in 1870. Kauri timber was milled and shingle was extracted from the park, creating the so-called Jones Bay Lagoon. The Auckland Regional Council (ARC) purchased the park from the Georgetti family in 1973, but the design has kept the rural feel of the park, and continues to host a working farm.

UTILISE THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

1. Vegetated gullies can filter runoff from hilltop paddocks before entering aquatic ecosystems.
2. Protected and revegetated pockets of native bush offer visitors encounters with native flora. Community groups and universities have been involved in revegetation and restoration programmes, which have improved wildlife diversity and revitalised depleted ecosystems in the park.
3. Simple non-formed metal paths are cost effective and are a low impact means of connecting visitors with the native bush.



Tawharanui works to intelligently harness the environmental benefits of the park. This stream naturally manages stormwater, and the native bush improve air quality. To assist in maximising the success of the park, TOSI (Tawharanui Open Sanctuary Society Inc.) grows and plants 20,000 trees, shrubs and other plants each year to revegetate key areas.

ENJOY MORE USE & A RANGE OF EXPERIENCES

1. Well-maintained and open beach reserve areas adjacent to popular beaches allow people to gather, have picnics and enjoy the coastal views.
2. Demarcation and signposting inform and guide the public through the sensitive ecological fringe, which is undergoing revegetation and sand dune stabilisation.
3. The park's unique coastline and marine reserve offers opportunities for surfers, snorkellers and scuba divers.



Tawharanui provides facilities and spaces that encourage a wide range of passive and active recreation opportunities such as: walking, fishing, bird watching, surfing, swimming, farm animal viewing, mountain biking, camping and picnicking.

TREASURE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Interpretation panels inform the public of the processes and benefits of sand dune stabilisation, and encourage their cooperation.
2. The revegetation of sand dunes provides habitats for native birds and insects, and helps to stabilise and protect the bank from erosion during storms and heavy seas.
3. Post and rope fences provide a cost efficient and durable material for demarcating sensitive areas. Although they do not keep all people out of these areas, they are effective for larger scale initiatives.



A Marine Park, established in 1981, covers much of the northern coastline and extends half a nautical mile seaward. The Marine Park is a 'no take' zone and all life is protected here..

CONNECT PLACES

1. Clear markers indicate trails of differing durations or physical requirements, allowing visitors to cross functioning pastures for a unique rural experience.
2. Pockets of fenced off revegetation create green 'islands' over expanses of open fields, offering safe habitat for native fauna.
3. Areas of native bush in gullies and on escarpments intercept and filter farm runoff before it reaches sensitive aquatic ecosystems. These areas are protected from livestock with simple fencing.



Views to other places from Tawharanui have been retained, allowing visitors to feel connected with the ocean and wider environment. Many of the walks in the park are unformed, but guided by coloured posts, preserving the rural environment, but allowing people to connect to beautiful parts of the park that they might not otherwise know to visit.

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