

Bay of Plenty Surf Break Study

April 2011



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An identification of significant surf breaks and development of associated evaluation criteria in the Bay of Plenty region

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Prepared by Bailey Peryman, with assistance from
Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Cover Photo:
Whakatāne Heads, photographer Tony Ogilvy

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Figure 1 Papamoa Beach – image by Bailey Peryman.

Executive summary

Surf breaks form unique areas in the natural character of the coastal environment. This study investigates criteria necessary to identify where surf breaks occur and rate their associated values in order to provide for their sustainable management under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Mandate for the recognition of surf breaks within the coastal environment comes under the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010, in what is a relatively new area of resource management in the New Zealand context. The report builds on existing approaches to surf break protection through public consultation and synthesis of a well-established knowledge base on the subject. The outcome is a robust methodology for identifying regionally significant surf breaks and the outstanding components of each break.

The response from community engagement was strongly in favour of continuing a positive and proactive approach to protecting surf breaks as regionally significant natural resources. Surf breaks provide for a healthy, recreational lifestyle with values that span the four well-beings for coastal communities in the Bay of Plenty region. Respondents were generally supportive of a collaborative approach to further policy development and implementation; as opposed to relying on costly challenges to ad hoc decisions made through the consenting process.

The study presents a surf break assessment criteria developed through community engagement. The key criteria used are wave quality, consistency and break type (rarity). The report identifies regionally significant surf breaks in the Bay of Plenty region and evaluates each break against the criteria described in the study. This has enabled the identification of individual components contributing to the outstanding value of each regionally significant break. The criteria can be used to assist in developing policy to manage regionally significant surf breaks. The regionally significant surf breaks (ordered geographically from East to West) identified in the Bay of Plenty region are:

1	Orokawa Bay	18	Matata Straights
2	Waihi Beach (North End)	19	Tarawera Cut ('the Black Drain')
3	Bowentown	20	Walkers Access ('Walkers', Walkers Road)
4	North Matakana		
5	Matakana Island (Puni's Farm)	21	Thornton Beach
6	North West Rock	22	Rangitaiki
7	Main Beach	23	Airports
8	Shark Alley	24	Coastlands
9	Mount Coast (east of Rabbit Island – Omanu)	25	Whakatane Heads
10	Arataki (off Girven Road)	26	Ohope (Westend)
11	Papamoa Beach ('the Domain')	27	Opotiki
12	Motiti Island (east side)	28	Torere
13	Kaituna Cut	29	Hawai
14	Maketu	30	Maraenui
15	Newdicks Beach	31	Motu River Mouth
16	Little Waihi	32	Hariki Beach
17	Pukehina Beach	33	Waihou Bay

Based on the findings of this study, the report recommends the use of developed spatial planning techniques, including policies and methods in the Regional Policy Statement, as well as objectives, policies, methods and rules in regional and district plans. Investigation of non-statutory planning methods for developing suitable management approaches is also suggested. Monitoring of surf breaks is also essential to better understand how they function in the natural environment, which can be achieved through gathering baseline data of surf breaks.

It is hoped the findings and recommendations presented in this report will be developed to assist policy makers in providing for surf breaks through the current resource management framework.

Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Executive summary	iii
Part 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Purpose of the study	1
1.2 What are surf breaks and why are they important?	1
1.3 What are the threats?	2
1.4 Why are surf breaks provided for in planning?	3
Part 2: History of surf riding in Aotearoa	5
2.1 Maori mythology and heritage	5
2.2 Modern surf culture	6
Part 3: Surfing in the Bay of Plenty	7
3.1 Overview of surf breaks in the Bay of Plenty region	7
3.2 Surf breaks in the Western Bay	7
3.3 Surf breaks in the Eastern Bay	8
Part 4: Mandate for surf break protection in New Zealand	9
4.1 Review of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994	9
4.2 Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2008	9
4.3 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010	10
4.4 Natural character of the coastal environment	12
4.5 Natural features and landscapes	13
Part 5: Existing tools for surf break protection	15
5.1 New Zealand	15
5.1.1 Taranaki Regional Council	15

5.1.2	Auckland Regional Council	15
5.2	International	16
5.2.1	Surfing Reserves	16
5.3	Lessons for developing surf break policy	16
Part 6: Public consultation		19
6.1	Methodology	19
6.2	Summary of findings	19
6.2.1	Surf break assessment criteria	19
6.2.2	Key themes underlying the significance of surf breaks	21
6.2.3	Local significance and the culture of surfing	22
6.2.4	Social values	22
6.2.5	Economic values	23
6.2.6	Environmental values	24
6.2.7	Progressing surf break policy provisions	25
Part 7: Identification of significant breaks in the region		27
7.1	Schedule of regionally significant surf breaks	27
7.2	Description of regionally significant surf breaks	27
7.3	Map series of regionally significant surf breaks	27
Part 8: Findings and recommendations		29
8.1	Giving effect to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement	29
8.2	Outcomes of the study	29
8.3	Recommendations	30
8.4	Adoption of surf break provisions into planning documents	30
8.5	Mapping	30
References		31

Appendix 1 – Map of study area	35
Appendix 2 – Suggested surf break provisions	37
Appendix 3 – The tribal law (young, 2000)	39
Appendix 4 – Surfers path article on surfing reserves	41
Appendix 5 – Community Engagement Plan	43
Appendix 6 – Consultation record	45
Appendix 7 – Consultation material	53
Appendix 8 – Surf break assessment criteria	61
Appendix 9 – Schedule and description of regionally significant surf breaks	63
Appendix 10 – Glossary	77
Appendix 11 – Maps of regionally significant surf breaks – Bay of Plenty	79

Part 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the study

The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) requires the protection of nationally significant surf breaks and enables the recognition of surf breaks to natural character and natural features and landscapes. This may be provided for in planning documents and decisions made under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). However, to date there is no consistent way or agreed method by which policy makers and planners identify and provide for surf breaks in the New Zealand resource management context.

This study investigates what is necessary to identify surf breaks and their associated values to provide for their sustainable management in the coastal environment as a natural resource under the RMA. The study area for doing this is the Bay of Plenty Region (Appendix 1). The study builds on existing work by Councils, through the development of NZCPS surf break policy and presents findings on public consultation undertaken over the 2010/11 summer period.

The need for recognising surf breaks in policy is important in light of rapidly increasing demands influencing land and water (fresh and marine) usage and ultimately affecting the integrity of the coastal environment. Suggestions for the wording of policy provisions are included in Appendix 2. Surf breaks and their users provide a unique lens for viewing these competing interests given their location in the 'mixing zone', the confluence of both land and aquatic environments.

This report contains a background on surf breaks and surf-riding within the context of the Bay of Plenty. It then outlines existing knowledge and the mandate for surf break protection in New Zealand. A description of public consultation and its findings is included, along with a schedule and description of regionally significant surf breaks in the Bay of Plenty.

1.2 What are surf breaks and why are they important?

Surf breaks are a finite natural resource and the source of recreation for a diverse and increasingly large range of participants. As a result, surf breaks provide a focal point for values that span the four well-beings (environmental, economic, social and cultural) and contribute to a healthy, community and family-based lifestyle. This lifestyle revolves around the dynamic natural phenomenon that is a surf break; developing respect amongst users, the environment and a sense of identity, ownership and responsibility for preserving the integrity of the coastal environment.

It is important to recognise surf breaks as more than the domain of a once underground and socially isolated surfing fraternity. Although still shared largely in the same spirit as modern surfing pioneers, surf-riding continues to evolve from its roots in traditional Hawaiian culture into a global community pursuing one of the world's most popular recreational activities.

Approximately 7% [310,000] of New Zealanders are estimated to "surf" on a regular basis¹. Surf-riding makes a valuable contribution to the well-being of New Zealanders by promoting health and fitness, cross cultural and intergenerational camaraderie. All this is based on a very simple experience - riding a wave, in particular a wave with the right characteristics - a "surf break". It is said that "only a surfer knows the feeling".

¹ Figures sourced from Surfing New Zealand.

Internationally, surfing is recognised as one of the foremost lifestyle sports. The international surf industry was estimated to be worth \$8 billion in 2003. There are estimated to be around 20 million surfers world-wide. The sport and its lifestyle have experienced rapid growth over the last three decades with the advent of professional surfing and its popularity as a recreation. Surfing and use of surf breaks for recreation will only continue to grow. This is increasing the demand for the allocation of space for surf riding as a recreation.

1.3 What are the threats?

Many surf breaks have come under threat from coastal activities in the past. There are many examples of this degradation in New Zealand and overseas. Most acutely, water quality has posed threats to breaks. Overseas, some cases have seen breaks become un-surfable due to the health hazard of pollutants being discharged into the mixing zones of surf breaks via land based point sources.

An example in New Zealand was during a flood event in Whangamata, in January 2011. This event saw waste water infrastructure fail. As a result, raw sewerage was discharged into the mixing zone of a nationally significant surf break, Whangamata Bar. Quality surfing days often coincide with storm events within the wave climate of New Zealand's north-east coast, and there were reports from the event of surfers suffering ill health including inflamed cuts, nausea and conjunctivitis. Below is a shot of the 'Chocolate Bar', as it was affectionately named that day.



Figure 2 'The Chocolate Bar'. Photo courtesy of COL/SURF2SURF.com.

While water quality poses an acute threat to the use and enjoyment of surf breaks, damage to wave quality and public access pose others. Coastal activities that are insensitive to the swell corridor, seabed morphology or hydrodynamics of a surf break can result in damage to wave quality or complete loss of a surfable wave.

Internationally, Mundaka in Spain is one of Europe's premier surf breaks. It was host to an Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP) World Tour event in 2005. However, the event was cancelled, due to the loss of wave quality resulting from dredging activity within the associated harbour. In New Zealand, there has been concern over the effect the Whangamata Marina may have on the performance of the Whangamata Bar. Whangamata Bar has an internationally renowned status as a surf break, affirmed by Hawaiian surfing legend, 'Mr Pipeline', Gerry Lopez. Lopez described the break as a "jewel in the South Pacific". The perceived threat to Whangamata has mobilised the surfing community to campaign for national level policy on the protection and preservation of surf breaks.

Private property rights have traditionally played a part in surfers gaining access to breaks. New Zealand has large tracts of rural land along its coastline. Although the Bay of Plenty has good road access along its coast, it is common for surfers to cross private property to access breaks. Many of these agreements have existed to benefit surfers. However, there are cases in the Bay of Plenty where access to breaks has been restricted causing conflicts between territorial authorities and land owners. Therefore, maintenance and enhancement of public access is required to ensure the continued use and enjoyment of surf breaks.

1.4 **Why are surf breaks provided for in planning?**

Competition for space in the coastal marine area (CMA) coupled with conflict over coastal activities hindering surf breaks has prompted developments in the field of surfing science and social research on surf breaks. This has resulted in an understanding of the coastal dynamics of surf breaks and the social, cultural and economic values they have.

This knowledge base is especially strong in New Zealand. In the mid-nineties, Waikato University and the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) established the Artificial Surfing Reef Programme. The programme looked at combining the amenity of surfing with multi-purpose, soft engineering solutions for coastal management. The programme has produced multiple benefits in terms of science and understanding about the social and environmental dynamics of surfing. This understanding has assisted in creating resource management policy to preserve surf breaks in New Zealand.

During the Board of Inquiry (BOI) into the NZCPS, submitters produced evidence on the current understanding of surf breaks, along with many experiences from all over the country about the value of surfing to recreation. In doing so, the submitters were successful in having national level resource management policy approved by the Minister of Conservation. This knowledge and understanding has also been applied overseas in the preservation of surf breaks through surfing reserves, which is touched on later in the report.

Part 2: History of surf riding in Aotearoa

2.1 Maori mythology and heritage

Surf-riding is interwoven within ancient Polynesian culture and Māori cultural heritage.² In Māori mythology Te Wai Pounamu (the South Island) is the Great Maui's waka. In this waka, Maui fished up Te Ika a Maui (North Island). Kaikoura is Maui's foot thwart which busted out on the waka as he pulled the fish up. That indicates Maui was balancing his pressure on the waka on his feet, like a surfer.

The South Island was then (pre the year 500a.d.) referred to as Te Waka o nga Ariki (the waka of the Gods). It was once a double hulled waka which flipped and one hull was lost, the other surviving hull is Te Wai Pounamu (then named Aotearoa). The South Island (as can be seen by the ocean floor scaring) travelled the entire Oceanic rim (as an ocean vessel), before crashing on a reef where we presently are. So this indicates some of the earliest ocean uses, began here in Te Wai Pounamu.

In tracing history of Maori carrying out the practice of wave riding, articles and some informants describe early Maori riding waves for leisure, regularly having kaitiaki like whales or dolphins. The joint activity of using Waka Ama and Long (Oro/Orooro) or Short (Papa Ariki) surf riding equipment, was described as Whakarere.

Te Papa Tongarewa Museum has written evidence on their website stating the use of Poha (blown up kelp bags) for recreational riding of waves. Two bags were tied together, placed over the shoulders so one is on each side, and then waves were ridden into shore in a bird like position. It is also believed this tradition may have originated from the South Island of New Zealand. These traditions are believed to have been practiced as early as 1200a.d. (the pre fleet period or earlier) up to the 1700's (1770a.d. Cooks arrival).

Surfing is part of New Zealand's cultural heritage, as the art of wave riding/surfing, was a necessary skill for all Waka navigation. Internal knowledge and skill is still shared among Polynesian ocean users, i.e. reading vibrations in the ocean (with a waka hoe/paddle) to determine where land is and ancient chants recalling the working physical and environmental working dynamics between ourselves and the natural world cycle, obtainable through the surfing experience.

Surf breaks play a major role for indigenous surfers in New Zealand today. National Māori competitions are held and Māori teams compete at international indigenous surfing events. There is also a notable resurgence in the practice of waka ama.

Section 6(e) of the RMA states that the relationship of Maori with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga shall be recognised and provided for as a matter of national importance. Under section 7(a) 'Other Matters', particular regard to kaitiakitanga shall be had in regard to natural resources (that include surf breaks), in achieving the purposes of the RMA. Therefore in providing for surf breaks the relationship of tangata whenua to surfing and surf breaks should be considered.

² Taken largely from SPS Submission on Proposed Canterbury Regional Council RPS:
<http://www.lincoln.ac.nz/Documents/LEaP/Final%20SPS%20Comments%20to%20Draft%20Canterbury%20RPS.pdf>

2.2 Modern surf culture

The advent of modern day surfing was inspired by Duke Kahanamoku who visited New Zealand beaches between 1915-1920. The 'Duke', as he was known, was a Hawaiian Olympic Gold medallist in swimming. He was internationally recognised for breathing life back into the dying art of surfing, one of the favourite ancient past time of his Polynesian ancestors.

Modern surf-riding has developed out of this traditional form and continues to evolve as a culture in its own right and is well established in parts of the Bay of Plenty. Now a global community, surfing is a culture rich in diversity and the way it is expressed. This is evident through the growing range of surf craft in the water (longboards, shortboards, paddle boards, canoes, and kayaks). What is unique about this culture is the universal code of ethics that bind all users of surf breaks. The integrity of these ethics is widely acknowledged to engender positive relationships between individuals both in the water and on land. By this code, surf break users learn to share waves in a safe way, respect each other and the surrounding environment. Understanding this code develops in conjunction with the eco-literacy³ of the individual where recreation doubles as outdoor education. This ethic has ensured the longevity of the unique experience of surf-riding. It is said that "only a surfer knows the feeling". Testament to this culture being alive and well in New Zealand is the recognition of surf breaks in the national level policy guiding the governance of our coastal environment.

³ For more on this concept see: Kahn, R. (2010). *Critical Pedagogy, Ecoliteracy and the Planetary Crisis: the ecopedagogy movement*. Peter Lang Publishing: New York, USA.

Part 3: Surfing in the Bay of Plenty

3.1 Overview of surf breaks in the Bay of Plenty region

The Bay of Plenty is a large, mainly sandy coastal area with a northerly aspect. There are a few rocky headlands that break up the long white sand beaches and it is around these headlands and harbours or river mouths that many of the Bay's best surf breaks are found (Bhana 1996; Brunskill & Morse 2004). Although an exposed coastal region, the Bay has a limited window for swell that is most consistent during summer and autumn, although is probably one of the less reliable east coast regions in terms of surf (Bhana 1996; Brunskill & Morse 2004). Its northerly outlook requires strong easterly or north to north-easterly swells to get in. The entire Bay of Plenty gets waves when the swell is up. The beaches are long and usually have plenty of surfable sand banks (Bhana, 1996; Brunskill & Morse 2004).

Throughout much of the Bay of Plenty, roads run next to the coast making access to breaks easy. During the summer months the Bay experiences a population explosion. In particular, Waihi, Mount Maunganui, Whakatāne and Ohope are popular summer holiday destinations for domestic and international tourists who come for surf, sand and sun. A number of towns offer a range of surf shops, surfboard and wetsuit manufacturers, surf schools and anything else a travelling surfer may need (Brunskill & Morse 2004).

Pockets of the region can be grouped around regionally distinctive geographical areas, largely as a reflection of the local recreational communities that frequent the breaks within these areas. This is also reflected in the allocation of criteria defining the outstanding features of each surf break and will provide a useful guide when focusing management options. For example, common landscape elements could assist in determining the spatial extent of breaks for mapping or groups of breaks significant to local communities could be considered together in community plans.

3.2 Surf breaks in the Western Bay

Mount Maunganui is one of New Zealand's major seaside holiday destinations. The Mount caters for thousands of tourists and holiday-makers who travel here each year to enjoy the sunshine, golden beaches and recreational facilities. The Mount lies on the sandy isthmus that joins the 230 metre high volcanic promontory at Tauranga Harbour's entrance to the mainland to the east (Bhana, 1996). Matakana Island is inseparable from the Mount surfing community despite access being restricted to boats or other motorised water craft. Paddling across is now prohibited due to the busy shipping alley. Matakana's exposed northern coastline consists of a steep-profile golden sand beach that stretches from the Katikati entrance of the Tauranga Harbour in the west to the Tauranga entrance in the east (Bhana, 1996).

There is a distinct local surfing community focused around the surf breaks at or within close proximity to the areas scheduled as Kaituna Cut, Maketu, Newdicks, Little Waihi, Pukehina Beach.

3.3 Surf breaks in the Eastern Bay

Whakatane and Ohope are situated at the base of a rocky headland that extends several hundred metres into the sea. The Whakatane River flows out on the western side of the headland and is a popular port for fishing and game fishing boats (Bhana, 1996). The township of Ohope is separated geographically from Whakatane, but shares the same popularity as a coastal community in its own right. This area is another of the Bay's popular coastal holiday destinations with a distinct local surfing community focused around the surf breaks in this area (generally from Matata out to the East Cape).

East of Opotiki and into the East Cape is a remote, rugged and largely undeveloped stretch of coastline that possess some legendary surf break setups (Brunskill & Morse 2004). They are bound especially by the landscape and seascape and the complete grass-roots, wilderness experience this offers surf break users. Tangata whenua extend significance far beyond recreational use of the surf breaks and resilient local hapu and iwi are reputed to be staunch guardians of these values. The area is also significant for 'outsiders' who have recreational ties to the area stretching several generations.

Part 4: Mandate for surf break protection in New Zealand

Local authorities with jurisdiction over the coastal environment are required to provide for the protection of surf breaks of national significance under the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS). This is in regard to functions under the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act) relating to the sustainable management of the coastal environment. The section outlines the mandate under the Act for surf break protection in New Zealand.

4.1 Review of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994

Provision for surf breaks in the NZCPS came about by a public review of the previous New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994. In 2004, the Department of Conservation initiated the 10-year review. This involved an independent review by Dr Johanna Rosier.⁴ In broad terms, the independent review identified that more clarity, direction and specific policy was required in relation to the coastal environment to achieve the purposes of the Act.

The independent review resulted in a recommendation to the Minister of Conservation that a formal review of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994 be undertaken. This recommendation was accepted and the review began.

4.2 Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2008

The Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2008 (PNZCPS) included Policy 20 'Surf breaks of national significance' (bold emphasis added to highlight key wording through the BOI process):

The surf breaks at **Ahipara, Northland; Raglan, Waikato; Stent Road, Taranaki; White Rock, Wairarapa; Mangamaunu, Kaikoura; and Papatowai, Southland**, which are of national significance for surfing, shall be protected from inappropriate use and development, including by:

- (a) ensuring that activities in the coastal marine area do not adversely affect the surf breaks; and
- (b) avoiding, remedying or *mitigating* adverse effects of other activities on access to, and use and enjoyment of the surf breaks.

The above policy incited significant response from surfers and surfing organisations resulting in around 90 submissions, making it one of the most submitted on policies in the PNZCPS. A Board of Inquiry (BOI) was appointed to hear submissions and make recommendations to the Minister of Conservation on the PNZCPS. Many concerns were raised in submissions over the identification of the breaks in Policy 20. Subsequently, after hearing evidence, the BOI adopted evidence of the Surfbreak Protection Society, resulting in a new schedule of 17 breaks for protection. Policy 20 was also reworded and in recommendations to the Minister.

⁴ Rosier, J 2004. An Independent Review of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement. Report to the Minister of Conservation. May 2004. Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

A new Policy 18 was put forward as follows:

All decision makers must recognise and protect surf breaks of national significance for surfing, **including those listed in Schedule 2**, by:

- (a) ensuring that activities in the **coastal environment** do not adversely affect the surf breaks; and
- (b) **avoiding** adverse effects of other activities on access to, and use and enjoyment of the surf breaks.

4.3 **New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010**

The final Policy 16 'Surf breaks of national significance' in the NZCPS 2010 reads relatively the same as the BOI recommendation above:

Protect the surf breaks of national significance for surfing listed in Schedule 1, by:

- (a) ensuring that activities in the coastal environment do not adversely affect the surf breaks; and
- (b) avoiding adverse effects of other activities on access to, and use and enjoyment of the surf breaks.

A 'surf break' is defined in the NZCPS 2010 glossary as:

A natural feature that is comprised of swell, currents, water levels, seabed morphology, and wind. The hydrodynamic character of the ocean (swell, currents and water levels) combines with seabed morphology and winds to give rise to a 'surfable wave'. A surf break includes the 'swell corridor' through which the swell travels, and the morphology of the seabed of that wave corridor, through to the point where waves created by the swell dissipate and become non-surfable. 'Swell corridor' means the region offshore of a surf break where ocean swell travels and transforms to a 'surfable wave'. 'Surfable wave' means a wave that can be caught and ridden by a surfer. Surfable waves have a wave breaking point that peels along the unbroken wave crest so that the surfer is propelled laterally along the wave crest.

The 17 surf breaks of national significance in Schedule 1⁵ are:

Northland

- Peaks – Shipwreck Bay
- Peaks – Super tubes – Mukie 2 – Mukie 1

Waikato

- Manu Bay – Raglan
- Whale Bay – Raglan
- Indicators – Raglan

⁵ The list was drawn from the Wavetrack New Zealand Surfing Guide. This was accepted by the Board of Inquiry as the most authoritative guide to New Zealand surf breaks and a legitimate proxy in the absence of any established assessment criteria for surf breaks.

Taranaki

- Waiwhakaiho
- Stent Road – Backdoor Stent – Farmhouse Stent

Gisborne

- Makorori Point – Centres
- Wainui – Stock Route – Pines – Whales
- The Island

Coromandel

- Whangamata Bar

Kaikoura

- Mangamaunu
- Meatworks

Otago

- The Spit
- Karitane
- Murdering Bay
- Papatowai

It should be noted that the breaks listed in the final schedule are primarily high performance waves by nature of the rating system applied in the Wavetrack Guide. They protect a group of breaks that are limited in the user groups they provide for. The breaks scheduled in Policy 16 remain the same as those listed in the BOI recommendation and must now be protected by the relevant local authorities.

The fundamental change in wording between Policy 18 and 16 was made by removing the word “including”. This renders the list of breaks in Schedule 1 conclusive, removing the ability to identify any future nationally significant breaks without a variation to the NZCPS. The ability to add to this list was desired by key submitters. BOI recommendations accepted these submissions in support of a policy enabling additional (yet to be identified) breaks, hence the use of the term “including”.

The ability to identify further breaks for protection, whether they be nationally significant or otherwise is provided for elsewhere in the NZCPS, which is discussed in Section 4.4.

4.4 Natural character of the coastal environment

None of the 'nationally significant' breaks fall within the Bay of Plenty Region. However, scope for application of the NZCPS 2010 to further identify surf breaks (across all scales of significance or importance) is addressed within the BOI working papers. There is a mandate for such work in the NZCPS 2010, as a result of Policy 13 'Preservation of natural character' which recognises surf breaks contribute to natural character under part 13(2)(c) of the policy. Under part 13(1)(a) of the policy, local authorities exercising their functions under this policy are required to avoid adverse effects on areas of outstanding natural character. This can be done via methods of mapping or otherwise identifying sites in regional policy statements and plans.

Policy 13 – Preservation of natural character (directly relevant provisions bolded for emphasis):

- (i) To preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and to protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:
 - (a) **avoid** adverse effects of activities on natural character in areas of the coastal environment with **outstanding natural character**; and
 - (b) avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment;including by:
 - (c) assessing the natural character of the coastal environment of the region or district, by **mapping or otherwise identifying** at least areas of high natural character; and
 - (d) ensuring **that regional policy statements, and plans, identify areas where preserving natural character requires objectives, policies and rules, and include those provisions.**
- (ii) Recognise that **natural character** is not the same as natural features and landscapes or amenity values and **may include matters such as**:
 - (a) natural elements, processes and patterns;
 - (b) biophysical, ecological, geological and geomorphological aspects;
 - (c) natural landforms such as headlands, peninsulas, cliffs, dunes, wetlands, reefs, freshwater springs and surf breaks;
 - (d) the natural movement of water and sediment;
 - (e) the natural darkness of the night sky;
 - (f) places or areas that are wild or scenic;
 - (g) a range of natural character from pristine to modified; and
 - (h) experiential attributes, including the sounds and smell of the sea; and their context or setting.

The matters listed in Policy 13 also include factors that contribute to the quality and integrity of the natural processes that create a surf break, such as ‘the natural movement of water and sediment’ (e.g. the case of the nationally significant Whangamata Bar surf break where dredging for a new marina within the coastal environment has altered sediment flows that shape ‘the Bar’). This is also supported in the BOI working papers:

The quality of the wave can potentially be compromised by developments in the swell corridor seaward of the break, and the enjoyment of surf breaks by surfers compromised by discharges, limitations on access, and changes to natural character.

In achieving the purposes of Policy 13, it should also be noted that the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment is a matter of national importance within section 6(a) of the RMA, which states:

In achieving the purpose of this Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall recognise and provide for the following matters of national importance:

- (e) the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development....

It should also be acknowledged that ‘avoidance’ is the applicable provision in Policy 13, as remediation and mitigation of surf breaks is not applicable. While technology exists to replace a natural surf break (with a multipurpose surfing reef), this is not considered to be a feasible approach. This was tested in the BOI process through submissions on the matter⁶. Subsequent amendments to policy wording resulted in preference for ‘avoidance’ as part of Policy 16.

4.5 Natural features and landscapes

Further mandate is also potentially provided by Policy 15 ‘Natural features and natural landscapes’ which includes ‘seascapes’ (DoC, 2010). The working papers for the BOI recommendation also support further investigation into New Zealand’s surf breaks through regional policy statements and plans.

We agree that the matters of national importance – particularly preserving the natural character of the coastal environment and outstanding natural features from inappropriate subdivision, use and development - involves more than protecting surf breaks of national significance. Surf breaks not identified and protected as nationally significant under policy 20 (now 16) are also likely to require consideration under other policies, such as natural character, outstanding natural features and landscapes, public open space and public access.

The natural character of an area includes surf breaks. This does not mean that surf breaks should only be considered in the context of their contribution to natural character. They are also a transiently legible part of the seascape, which includes the geological, topographical and hydrodynamic components. Seascapes are not simply the bit of water bounded by land, nor are outstanding features simply those that are permanently above water or on dry land. Consequently, the recognition and protection of nationally and regionally outstanding surf breaks as features in

⁶ See evidence of Hamish Rennie, retrieved October 20, 2010 from <http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/getting-involved/consultations/current-consultations/nzcps/evidence/133-nzcps-evidence-7-7.pdf>

themselves or as features within landscape/seascape is another consideration for surf break policy development. These components are specifically reflected in Policy 15 of the NZCPS 2010 which states: (bold emphasis added)

To protect the natural features and natural landscapes (**including seascapes**) of the coastal environment from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:

- a) avoid adverse effects of activities on outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes in the coastal environment; and
- b) avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy, or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on other natural features and natural landscapes in the coastal environment; including by:
- c) identifying and assessing the natural features and natural landscapes of the coastal environment of the region or district, at minimum by land typing, soil characterisation and landscape characterisation and having regard to:
 - i. natural science factors, including geological, topographical, ecological and dynamic components;
 - ii. the presence of water including in seas, lakes, rivers and streams;
 - iii. legibility or expressiveness – how obviously the feature or landscape demonstrates its formative processes;
 - iv. aesthetic values including memorability and naturalness;
 - v. vegetation (native and exotic);
 - vi. transient values, including presence of wildlife or other values at certain times of the day or year;
 - vii. whether the values are shared and recognised;
 - viii. cultural and spiritual values for tangata whenua, identified by working, as far as practicable, in accordance with tikanga Māori; including their expression as cultural landscapes and features;
 - ix. historical and heritage associations; and
 - x. wild or scenic values;
- d) ensuring that regional policy statements, and plans, map or otherwise identify areas where the protection of natural features and natural landscapes requires objectives, policies and rules; and
- e) including the objectives, policies and rules required by (d) in plans.

Part 5: Existing tools for surf break protection

5.1 New Zealand

5.1.1 Taranaki Regional Council

Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) was the first local authority to provide for surf break protection within RMA policy. This was achieved by the recognition of 81 surf breaks in the Regional Policy Statement published in 2009. TRC identified surf breaks that are important to the region using the council's inventory of Coastal Areas of Local or Regional Significance in the Taranaki Region (2004), the *Wavetrack New Zealand Surfing Guide* (Brunskill and Morse 2004) and through consultation with local board-riding clubs (TRC 2009).

The 81 breaks are mapped within the Regional Policy Statement, to show either the location of an individual surf break or by a line extending along the coast where there is a protected surf zone. Some breaks are within a yellow shaded area identified as a "coastal area of local or regional significance" but it is not clear if the extent of the shading reflects the spatial area of the surf break. No information is provided within the Taranaki RPS 2009 regarding the values of the different breaks or whether some are more significant than others.

Within their Regional Policy Statement, Taranaki Regional Council has opted to protect the scheduled breaks by referring to them in the policy explanations, rather than in objectives, policies or methods. This approach has both advantages and disadvantages. Explanations can provide useful context for policies by including examples and descriptions of what is meant by policies. In addition, having more general objectives and policies allows a more concise Regional Policy Statement than including a greater level of detail within the statutory provisions.

However, it is the objectives, policies and methods that actually have statutory weight and provide the statutory link between the wording of the policies and the surf breaks scheduled in the RPS maps (ARC 2010). Relying on explanations does not give any greater statutory recognition of surf breaks than was present before the amendments were made in response to submissions. This approach could result in a lack of recognition of surf breaks unless plan users continually refer back to the background sections of the RPS.

5.1.2 Auckland Regional Council

The former Auckland Regional Council (ARC) prepared a 'Draft Auckland Regional Policy Statement Background Report – Surf Breaks' in March 2010 to inform their draft RPS. This report has not resulted in any public policy to date.

The ARC report was conducted by experts in the field of coastal science and coastal planning, with knowledge and experience in surfing and surf breaks within the Auckland region. It was an in-house, background report for policy development that did not go out for public consultation.

The report came up with a list of criteria for rating (numerically) a range of factors specific to the unique characteristics of surf breaks. Once aggregated, the individual ratings for each criterion gave the break an overall rating.

5.2 International

5.2.1 Surfing Reserves

The environmental movement is growing within the surfing community and is perhaps exemplified by the World Surfing Reserves initiative.⁷ These reserves are symbolic, however their strength arguably lies in the education and celebration of unique surf breaks. This is important as it enables locals to feel that their special places are recognised as such. The vision involved in surfing reserves is essentially to dedicate and respect iconic surfing areas for future generations.

Surfing reserves are well established in Australia through the National Surfing Reserves programme recognised by the BOI during the NZCPS process (DoC, 2009a). These reserves are protected by law, with coastal waters gazetted under legislation. There are currently eleven reserves in Australia, with many more planned. Hawaii has also passed legislation creating surfing reserves of similar status in Waikiki and the North Shore.

Reserves can have wider functional benefits informing visiting surfers of the important cultural aspects of an area. They also can also serve as a reminder of the universal surf riders code of ethics which promotes an enjoyable surfing experience for all (Appendix 3). It is important to note this 'code' has largely remained unwritten and regardless of how it is recognised, will be enforced by surfers according to their localised interpretation. Enshrining such a code in statute is potentially the most abhorrent, insensitive recognition of surf culture local authorities could achieve. There are also a number of concerns surrounding the influence of the surfing 'industry' (i.e. commercial interests) in the wording of policy derived from the values embodied in surfing reserves (see Appendix 4).

5.3 Lessons for developing surf break policy

Overall, analysis of the NZCPS Board of Inquiry recommendations and existing approaches to surf break protection policy display a number of key learnings:

- (a) The need for a robust methodology for identifying and rating a representative range of surf breaks.
- (b) The requirement for explicit recognition of surf breaks within relevant statutory provisions rather than relying on consideration of general values/issues (e.g. water quality, access, natural character).

General values (e.g. water quality, access, natural character) are important but there is a need to recognise where natural processes create an important recreational resource that has social, cultural and economic benefits for the wider community – i.e. as a greater/additional value created by the unique feature that is a surf break.

- (c) General values associated with surf breaks should not be limited to the predominantly high performance breaks identified as nationally significant in Policy 16. Local breaks that foster surfing communities and cater for all levels of surfers is also important at a regional level. These could include 'nursery' breaks that have high recreation value for a variety of reasons (e.g. 'regionally significant' breaks may also include popular town beaches).

⁷ For more see the following websites:

<http://www.surfingreserves.org/>

http://www.savethewaves.org/WSR_faqs

- (d) Specific aspects of the definition of 'surf break' are important concepts to include in policy development. Swell, currents, water levels, seabed morphology, and wind are all components of surf breaks and any activities that impact these physical processes could adversely affect surfing wave quality and consistency.
- (e) The definition of a surf break can cover a large spatial extent, beyond the location of water riding. The swell corridor of a surfing break could extend far out to sea (beyond the 12 nautical mile mark), and activities such as aquaculture, dredge spoil disposal and wave energy infrastructure at certain scales could block or modify waves travelling through the swell corridor.
- (f) Avoidance of effects is appropriate for policy making, as mitigation or remediation of a surf break is impracticable. Further to this, the precautionary approach should be taken toward management of breaks when considering threats because there is a lack of scientific information about surf breaks.
- (g) Activities beyond the CMA can potentially effect surf breaks such as land based discharges effecting water quality and sedimentation, and restriction of public access to a break.

Part 6: Public consultation

6.1 Methodology

The purpose of public consultation was to develop existing knowledge of surf break protection methods and techniques by testing them in consultation with local communities. Engagement included the following methods:

- 1 Two public workshops held at Mount Maunganui and Whakatane.
- 2 Targeted interviews with surfers that have extensive experience surfing in the Bay of Plenty region.
- 3 Formal correspondence with other interested parties (emails, phone calls, meetings).

The complete methodology for public consultation is laid out in the 'community engagement plan' drafted in the scoping stage of the project (see Appendix 5). A consultation record is included in Appendix 6. This includes a summary of all the consultation undertaken throughout the study. Material used during public consultation to gather input and promote the study are included in Appendix 7. It is noted here that material for the workshops were the same, in both Mount Maunganui and Whakatāne.

6.2 Summary of findings

6.2.1 Surf break assessment criteria

Justification for developing a more robust methodology and set of criteria for identifying breaks is addressed in the BOI working papers:

We conclude that there should be no criteria in the policy [NZCPS 2010] for selecting further surf breaks of national significance given that there could be developments in the methodology in identifying and rating natural surf breaks. For example, we note the strong plea by many submitters for ensuring diversity of surf breaks so that all surfing skill levels are provided for (DoC 2009b).

'Surf Break Assessment Criteria' were developed through consultation with the public and amongst coastal experts involved with surf break protection. The assessment criteria "headings" developed through consultation are included below.

See Appendix 8 for further details of the criteria.

Compulsory Criteria

- 1 Wave Quality
- 2 Break type
- 3 Consistency of surfable waves

Optional Criteria

- 4 Size or diversity of break area.
- 5 Naturalness/Scenery.

- 6 Level of use.
- 7 Amenity value and access..
- 8 Local community and competition.
- 9 Value as a national/internationally recognised break.
- 10 Cultural values.

Assessment criteria have been developed as a guide for identifying the outstanding values, features and characteristics of a surf break. Criteria consider these aspects for surf breaks as part of the natural character and as natural features and landscapes (including seascapes) of the coastal environment.

The ARC report first came up with criteria because it is preferable to explicitly recognise surf breaks within policies, rather than relying on general values as adequate provisions. Surf breaks should be recognised as unique locations where natural processes create an important recreational resource that has social, economic and cultural benefits for the wider community (ARC 2010).

Criteria are important as a robust tool in the development of the methodology for protecting surf breaks. They are best applied at the identification stage in developing surf break policy through consultation with users and local interests connected with each break. This process of identification through consultation is important for a number of reasons:

- Surf breaks have different importance for different users. The value of a break is largely in the eye of the beholder. A learner break would be highly valued by a beginner, but less valued by an experienced surfer looking for high quality waves.
- Local knowledge is currently the most authoritative source of information on the various values of surf breaks in terms of access to, use and enjoyment of a surf break.

Therefore a break may be outstanding for a diverse range of reasons. The assessment criteria in Appendix 8 are designed to capture this.

Surf break users tend to frequent a select range of breaks within a localised region, at times venturing farther afield to breaks which are favoured. Commenting on breaks they have not surfed, or do not surf regularly, is considered by surfers to be beyond the rights of that individual. Surf break assessments are not likely to be credible or accurate if conducted without input from persons with some prior experience or observation of the break. This is because they are the people who frequently access the breaks, know their history, understand the inherent qualities and how they contribute to the fabric of the local surfing community and surf industry.

Respondents highlighted the need to separate the evaluation of overall wave quality, wave consistency and rarity as the most important aspects in assessing a break. They are less subjective values and consultation shows they are generally able to be rated numerically. The same applies for break type which can be easily recognised and categorised in terms of rarity (Scarfe 2008). In general, respondents felt there was a need to weigh and distinguish certain criteria as more important than others. This element is important for future considerations of how to establish the relative importance, significance or 'level of outstandingness' for a break (or for any part of Policy 13 and 15 for that matter).

Respondents also highlighted the need for qualitative analysis in the assessment of a break beyond simply assigning numerical values. This suits the identification of all the other aspects of a surf break that provide values associated with access, use and enjoyment. In light of this, criteria are worded to reflect the different aspects of the NZCPS policies directing the mandate to provide for surf breaks. For example, criteria No.5 directly addresses Policy 15 (c)(iv) *aesthetic values including memorability and naturalness* and (c)(x) *wild or scenic values* (DoC 2010).

Given the variation in perception of values by users and the different attributes surf breaks have, comparing the quality or significance of different surf breaks presents difficulties. This issue was raised in consultation using the ARC approach to assessing surf breaks, it would be arbitrary to rate an attribute that is not applicable to a surf break. This may undermine the 'outstandingness' of an important attribute, therefore may not result in a robust assessment of that break. However, it was acknowledged in consultation that there are some assessment criteria that can be attributed to all surf breaks; namely wave quality, consistency and rarity.

Therefore in response to the issues raised, the study has developed an assessment criteria model that enables the individual merits of each break to be assessed. This assessment criteria includes the important standardised criteria of wave quality, consistency and rarity to be factored into the assessment of any surf break, and then provides for other optional criteria to be attributed to a break on a case by case basis.

Consultation established the legitimacy of the *Wavetrack Guide* as a starting point to develop a clear enough understanding of surf breaks and their associated use. The guide also proved useful in its application for supporting other values or definitions, such as rating wave quality for criteria No.1, or identifying the break type in criteria No.2. It should be noted here that the final ratings for surf breaks in Appendix 9, in terms of wave quality do not correlate to those in the Wave Track Guide. This is because Wavetrack is a national guide that rates breaks on this basis. Regionally significant surf breaks should be assessed in respect to the context of the Council's jurisdiction. This will ensure that a wave is rated in respect to how good it is in Bay of Plenty surfing terms, not in comparison to the rest of the country.

Finally, it is important to distinguish between use of the criteria as a guidance tool for identifying the values, characteristics and features of a break and its associated use; as opposed to application for the purposes of conducting an environmental impact assessment. Although criteria may evolve or be malleable to suit this purpose, this has not been explored within this study.

In summary, criteria have been designed to identify the components of outstanding value of regionally significant surf breaks and their contribution to natural character of the coastal environment. For the experienced surfer it is undoubtedly the quality of the waves, the type of break and the consistency of high quality surfable waves. For the wider recreational community, surf breaks possess many other values. Overall, the criteria represent the varying aspects of why a break is outstanding.

6.2.2 Key themes underlying the significance of surf breaks

The following are the key themes arising from consultation and a synthesis of the existing knowledge of coastal experts and key entities involved in the subject.

6.2.3 Local significance and the culture of surfing

Even though waves break everywhere along a coast, good surf spots are rare (Scarfe 2008). A surf break that forms great surfable waves may easily become a prized resource, especially if the wave lacks consistently surfable conditions. If this break is near a population centre, particularly a large area with many surfers, territorialism often arises. A form of tribalism amongst frequent surf break users is a fairly well recognised part of surf culture and is reflected in a number of ways.

Throughout all forms of consultation, respondents consistently stated they could only comment on breaks they frequent regularly in their local area, or spots they travel to based on a memorable experience formed during previous use. Speaking beyond familiar places and experiences is considered to be beyond the rights of that individual. This may be similar to the way tangata whenua who generally reserve detailed comment on issues beyond their tribal area (rohe).

The culture also enters the spiritual realm for many. For example, one respondent described their local break as “our church for our religion”. This form of spirituality has attracted academic attention and is generally considered “a religious form in which a specific sensual practice constitutes its sacred centre, and the corresponding experiences are constructed in a way that leads to a belief in nature as powerful, transformative, healing, and sacred” (Taylor 2007, p 923).

Surf breaks can be considered as sacred treasures, taonga and waahi tapu because of their historical link to Māori. Be it a form of culture or religion, surf-riding and its associated activities are the practice of that form. The culture and the place are inextricably linked. A unique aspect of surfing is the universal code that defines the practice and etiquette involved in the access to, use and enjoyment of a surf break. This is adapted to local conditions but will always take the same form regardless of the characteristics of the place. The same concept applies to the formation of surfable waves which are shaped by highly localised conditions, although the recognisable form surf-riders look for will always be apparent.

6.2.4 Social values

The surfing community is large, and has a strong place in the community. This is recognised at national level by stand-alone policy for surf breaks of national significance, as well as direct recognition of surf breaks as forming part of the natural character of the coast. There are very few recreational activities reliant on natural features that have been specifically provided for in such a way within resource management.

Users of surf breaks share them in many different forms of recreation with many positive qualities for the physical and mental health for people of all ages and walks of life⁸. At the grass-roots level, a mixture of formal and informal measures is required to mitigate the increasing pressures on surf breaks. At the core of this issue, there appears to be a need for a broad, well-rounded vision for what surf break protection is aiming to achieve. This is especially so given the subject (surf breaks and our very precious coastal environment) is likely to become popular and exposed to wider media coverage. This attention was experienced first-hand in the media coverage afforded this to study.

This cohesion is crucial in order to maintain both the integrity of the natural coastal environment; but also the integrity of the ‘vibe’ within a line-up (see Glossary for definition). This ‘vibe’ is critical to enjoyment of a surf break. If the local etiquette is increasingly being disrespected then the situation can turn into a nasty case of ‘surf

⁸ N. Nicely, personal communication, January 14, 2011

rage'. Social capital is integral to this, through the relationships that are built in the surf, on the beach, in the car park and beyond. Surf breaks are the gathering points for surfers to participate, catch up, encourage young learner surfers, hold contests, and hang out⁹. In the words of one respondent, "they provide a kind of loom from which the social fabric and culture of surfing and surfers is woven".

As much as surf-riding is perceived as an individualistic pursuit there is a lot of camaraderie as a grass-roots activity that remains largely unknown to the general public. Despite this, surf-riding has a massive influence on our social constructs, behaviours and consumer choices. From a non-surfer's perspective, surf culture is perhaps largely misunderstood through the distortion or hyperinflation of the core values and culture that surf-riders truly appreciate.

In light of this, there is also what appears to be a common discrepancy for who this social construct represents. One respondent presented evidence of social marketing efforts by non-surfing companies aimed at changing behaviour, commodity sales and enhanced product meaning through association with 'cool' or healthy lifestyles. This often employs imagery from very visual action sports of which surfing is a highly respected discipline. This image of surfing differs substantially from exposure focused on surfing professionals to the reality of its practice for the average recreationalist.

An important point of difference for this subject was made by another respondent who sought to clarify the difference between the surfing industry and the surfing *community*. The 'industry' being more the competitive and commercial sector of surf-riders indicated as perhaps only 5-10% of known 'surfers'; and, the surfing community as the general recreational users of surf breaks largely removed from 'the cool image'. The underlying issue here is the potential for capture of surf break protection by well-organised interests (i.e. 'key stakeholders') for commercial purposes, versus the values of the wider coastal recreation community interested in family, friends and fun.

The uniquely positive thing about surf-riding culture is its broader reach socially beyond the realm of exploitive use of 'cool constructs' – seeing as a wide range of ages take part in using surf breaks (J. Mead, personal communication, 8 February, 2011). Again, this identifies with surf breaks and their use that relies on natural characteristics preserved for many generations. A coherent recognition across all user-groups is fundamental to maintaining the integrity of the social values derived from the access to, use and enjoyment of surf breaks.

6.2.5 Economic values

Surf breaks have wider benefits in terms of economic activity in the local area. International research demonstrates that surf breaks have significant economic value (Lazarow et al. 2007; Nelson et al. 2007). This was recognised by the Board of Inquiry in the drafting of the NZCPS 2010 which stated, "The economic value of surfing to tourism and the social benefits should not be underestimated" (DoC, 2009a). Consultation also identifies the significance of surf breaks as a finite natural resource providing for the economic well-being of local communities throughout the Bay of Plenty region.

9 J. Mead, personal communication, 8 February, 2011

Waihi, Mount Maunganui and Whakatane, for example, are popular summer holiday destinations for New Zealanders and tourists who come for surf, sand and fun in the sun (Brunskill and Morse, 2004). Each of those towns and a good deal more offer a range of manufacturers and retail outlets selling all forms of water craft and accessories, surf schools, and just about anything else both the resident and travelling surf break user need. This is as far-reaching as the humble, yet legendary, Maketu Pie that even gets a mention in the *Wavetrack Guide* (Brunskill and Morse, 2004).

Surf break users come from all walks of life and thus contribute to the region's labour force. Many respondents spoke of their employment purely as a means to support the lifestyle afforded by living in an area with a good surf break. Matakana Island and Ohope's Westend are examples of surf breaks that underpin lifestyles where employment is secondary to the presence of good surfable waves. Therefore, surf breaks contribute directly to the economy by providing a labour force of surfers who choose to locate to the Bay and attract businesses that cater for surf riding needs. Surfing also brings tourism to the Bay from people travelling from outside of the region or from overseas. Lessons of the economic importance of surf breaks have been proven overseas and many examples of this were given to the BOI.

With a rapidly expanding market demand for products associated with surfing, the potential for economic gain in the surfing industry is vast. As established there are multiple positive values pinned to the use of surf breaks. Therefore, the relationship between commercial interests, surf breaks users and local government authorities possesses significant economic values.

6.2.6 Environmental values

Natural processes

Surf breaks rely on the quality and integrity of the natural processes that create them, such as the 'the natural movement of water and sediment'. For example, sediment flows are critical to shaping the river mouth bar that creates the high quality break at the Whakatane Heads. Another prime example of this is the Tauranga harbour delta. This is responsible for creating the legendary waves at Matakana Island (Puni's Farm) through the process of offshore wave-focussing. These are processes commonly understood by locals who have an intimate understanding of the fickle nature of coastal dynamics and who are dependent on them for producing surfable waves.

Amenity values

The amenity values of surf breaks are also significant to users, onlookers and general beach-goers. The value of this visual amenity is again exemplified by the Whakatane Heads. Facilities at this location enable easy access for surf-riders and onlookers alike to join in or simply enjoy the spectacle of the wave breaking during optimum conditions. All of this is seated within the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape and seascape. These values can to be considered in a different light altogether, using the Motu River Mouth break as example. The raw, undeveloped natural land and seascape contributes to a wilderness experience that is not only unique to the region, but iconic at a national level. In general, surf breaks are interconnected to wider landscape and seascape values that, across the region, represent and provide for a diverse range of coastal amenity values. Scenic and naturalness values were consistently identified as outstanding features of surf breaks identified in the region. The transient and memorable nature of these experiences ought to be considered in conjunction with their dynamic natural components.

Catchment management

The wider catchment of a surf break is an important environmental issue for the quality of use and enjoyment of a surf break. For example, water quality in the Whakatane River commonly impacts on the surfing experience at the Whakatane Heads. Storm events observed during the study highlighted the downstream effect of particular land uses within river catchment. Surf riders are different to most ocean users. They commonly surf during rainfall/storm events that generally create optimal swell conditions. Therefore swollen rivers and discharges commonly coincide with optimum surf conditions. This presents health risks to surf users in catchments with large amounts of contaminants flushed into the mixing zone where surfers generally locate.

Finally, again referencing Whakatane Heads, respondents also identified new subdivision (Coastlands) and waahi tapu (Opihi Urupa) both before and on the Piripai Spit as examples of issues to consider for access to a break.

These are general issues that need to be provided for by land use controls in regional and district plans, as well as using management areas in regional coastal plans. Respondents recognised the general threats to surf breaks, 'upstream' effects and the potential for flow-on impacts from decisions made concerning surf breaks.

The BOI recommendations also highlight this as follows: "the quality of the wave can potentially be compromised by developments in the swell corridor seaward of the break, and the enjoyment of surf breaks by surfers compromised by discharges, limitations on access, and changes to natural character" (DoC 2009b). These are physical attributes of a surf break specifically provided for in the definition included within the NZCPS 2010. Swell, currents, water levels, seabed morphology and wind are all components of surf breaks and any activities that impact these physical processes could adversely affect the quality and consistency of surfable waves – and therefore the overall surf-riding experience. For example, the swell corridor (including its seabed morphology) of a surf break could be affected by dumping of dredging spoil. While the exact sciences of these effects require further investigation; the impact on a surf break must be considered to an extent that reaches beyond the specific location of surf-riding.

Ensuring a diversity of representative range of surf breaks is provided for in the NZCPS. This provision was included in response to the submissions from surf break users all around the country. The BOI are stated as saying, "we note the strong plea ... for ensuring diversity of surf breaks so that all surfing skill levels are provided for" (DoC 2009b).

6.2.7 Progressing surf break policy provisions

Implementation of surf break policy requires a greater understanding of the factors that determine the spatial extent of a break. For the overall purpose of implementing surf break policy, accurate spatial mapping also requires the ability for definitions to address a high level of variation both within a region *and* each surf break location i.e. different characteristics will require varying responses that are site specific.

Trying to do too much at the RPS level, particularly with a lack of expert information, is potentially a futile exercise. The details of surf break provisions ought to emerge at the Regional, Coastal, District and Community plan levels. In this sense, understanding and effectively integrating the planning hierarchy within the RMA framework is important.

Scarfe *et al.* (2009) emphasised the need for consideration of surf breaks in strategic planning and in baseline environmental monitoring, as well as in one-off assessments of environmental effects for particular developments near a surfing break. The RPS is an important means of requiring such consideration as it can influence planning for the land and the coastal marine area, and guide decision making in resource consents and other processes.

There are questions over where the responsibility for monitoring falls including, resourcing and appropriate methods for establishing baselines. In light of this, respondents all spoke passionately how the topic of the study resonated as important and something they ought to take some ownership, responsibility and involvement in.

Local authorities have the ability to mandate combined management. Where policy implementation is often restricted and lacking effectiveness is the ability to fund management strategies. Given an existing level of community ownership inherent in the cultural connection between users and their natural resource, there is an existing incentive for enabling community-based co-management.

Part 7: Identification of significant breaks in the region

This study develops the 'wavetrack method' into a more robust model for identifying regionally significant surf breaks. Consultation established the Wavetrack NZ Surfing Guide as a legitimate starting point for identifying regionally significant surf breaks. The original wavetrack method was limited through the absence of any established criteria beyond the 'stoke rating'. This rating only measures the quality of the wave in optimum conditions.

7.1 Schedule of regionally significant surf breaks

The schedule of regionally significant breaks identified in Appendix 9 is made up of breaks in the Wavetrack NZ Surfing Guide with some additional breaks being identified through targeted consultation with local surfers. This schedule of surf breaks is not exhaustive. Although the schedule is a comprehensive list of surf breaks that are well-known in the region, there are other breaks that are not identified. This may be for two reasons:

- 1 Other surf breaks in the region may have been overlooked by the Wavetrack guide and by those consulted; or
- 2 Breaks have intentionally not been identified as they are 'secret spots'.

Secret spots are breaks where their location is removed from public exposure. This concept is of cultural significance for surf-riding communities. This tradition in surfing is intended to preserve the existing values of a unique break to ensure the integrity of its access, use and enjoyment is not detracted from. In resource management practice, the concept may have similar parallels to waahi tapu sites, where the location of some sites remain intentionally undisclosed for cultural purposes. In consultation with surfers it was established that secret spots do fall within the areas identified in this schedule, however specific reference to their geographical location is reserved. For the management of surf breaks in policy, the notion of secret spots should be eluded to. Or alternatively, there should be provisions for future identification of surf breaks, so that regionally significant breaks are not restricted from being identified in the future.

7.2 Description of regionally significant surf breaks

Appendix 9 includes a description of the regionally significant surf breaks. The Surf Break Assessment Criteria (Appendix 8) were used by respondents to guide the description and identify the outstanding components of each break. Criteria were integral in developing descriptions beyond the limited information in the Wavetrack Guide.

7.3 Map series of regionally significant surf breaks

A map series indicating the approximate location of the surf breaks was developed during the study for reference purposes (Appendix 11). This map series enables a basic understanding of the general location of breaks and their surrounding environment. However, more accurate mapping would be required for identification in any statutory plans. This should include GPS co-ordinates afforded to map series attributes to define the location of regionally significant surf breaks.

Further detailed mapping would assist in providing for the effective management of surf breaks at this level. These maps need to show the spatial extent of breaks, natural factors (like swell windows, sediment paths, tidal flows in and out of estuaries and other hydrodynamic features of surf breaks). This requires detailed work and expert input not within the parameters of this study.

It is noted that work has been undertaken by ASR Ltd in Raglan to provide mapping for the effective management of surf breaks at a regional and local level.

Part 8: Findings and recommendations

Below is a summary of the key findings from the study and recommendations for developing management tools for the protection of surf breaks for planning purposes.

8.1 Giving effect to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

The study has identified 33 regionally significant surf breaks in the Bay of Plenty that contribute to natural character elements under Policy 13 of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010.

In order to recognise and protect surf breaks effectively, an understanding of the values, features and characteristics of surf breaks is required. This is achieved through consultation with experts familiar with the natural qualities of surf breaks and consulting people with experience and knowledge about surf breaks. This process has been illustrated through this study.

8.2 Outcomes of the study

Consultation was mainly carried out within the surfing fraternity. However, it also included input from recreation professionals, tangata whenua, economic development interests and surf life saving. Regional Council staff were informed about the study through presentations and discussions. Key findings were:

- Thirty three surf breaks are identified as significant at a regional level, for the reasons provided in the descriptions in Appendix 9. These reasons have been attributed from the assessment criteria in Appendix 8 through consultation and research.
- Regionally significant surf breaks are based mainly on the Wavetrack guide, which is the most well accepted guide in the country. This was justified through consultation with the surfing community who accepted the guide as a legitimate proxy for identifying regionally significant breaks in the region. Further to this, other breaks, not identified in the guide were identified through consultation. Through consultation and the use of the assessment criteria, these breaks are also considered to be regionally significant.
- The response from stakeholders identified the importance of protecting surf breaks as regionally significant natural resources, particularly for local communities in the Bay of Plenty region. Some surfers were cautious about protection due to media exposure of surf breaks and for what purposes surf breaks were being protected.
- A diversity of surf breaks needs to be recognised.
- The interests of a wide range of activities that use surf breaks need to be recognised in providing for surf breaks. This includes, but is not limited to, surfing, surf life saving, paddle boards, body surfing and kite surfing.
- Surf breaks provide amenity value for passive on-lookers who often watch activities in the surf or the waves for their aesthetic value.

- Respondents supported a collaborative approach with the community for further policy development and implementation. This is as opposed to maintaining the status quo that relies on costly challenges to ad hoc decisions made through the consenting process where surf breaks are not provided for in plans.

8.3 Recommendations

As a result of these findings, the following recommendations are made to the Regional Council:

- The spatial extent of surf breaks should be mapped using GPS references by incorporating a number of attributes including swell corridor, sediment paths, access points, seabed features, and hydrological features.
- Surf breaks could be managed through spatial planning, including policies and methods in statutory plans.
- Surf breaks could also be managed using spatially allocated coastal marine zones, with controls over activities using rules. This may present a robust, approach for policy makers to ensure surf breaks are adequately provided for through the current resource management framework.
- Community based plans may be a good way for the community to actively manage and take ownership of their surf breaks.

8.4 Adoption of surf break provisions into planning documents

Should policy be included to protect the surf breaks identified as regionally significant then appropriate policy could be included in the Regional Policy Statement or Regional Coastal Environment Plan. Suggestions for the wording of such provisions are included in Appendix 2.

8.5 Mapping

The map series (Appendix 11) developed for this report is *indicative only* and should only be used for the purposes of this study to show the location of surf breaks identified in the study.

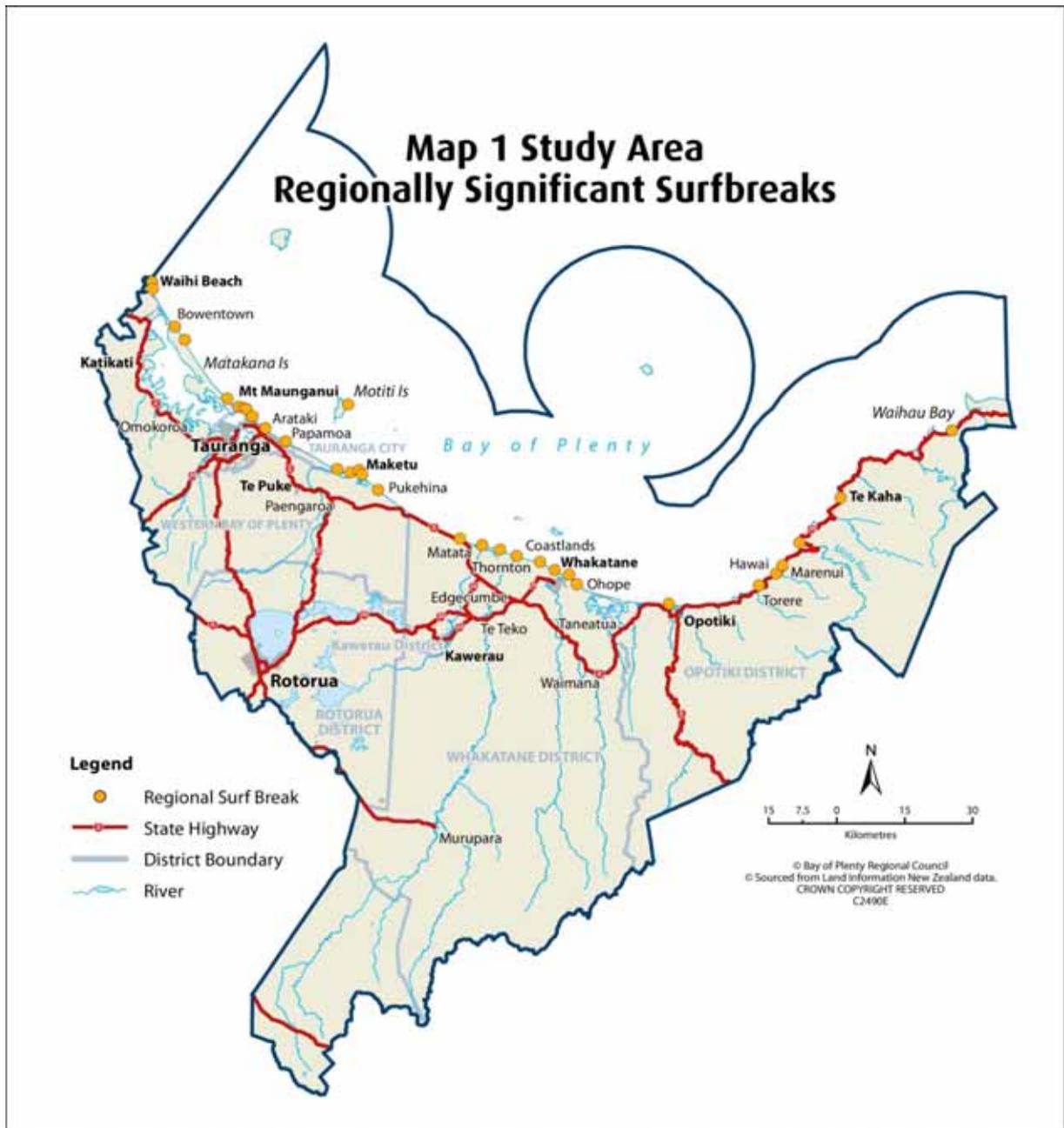
- For any statutory purposes, mapping is required to accurately plot the location of a surf break with GPS co-ordinates.
- At Coastal Plan level, mapping would need to include the spatial extent of surf breaks, along with natural physical components that contribute to their functioning including swell corridors, access points, sediment paths, seabed features and hydrological features.
- Catchment mapping in regional plans need to highlight locations where discharges and waterways exit into the mixing zones of regionally significant surf breaks.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Map of study area



Appendix 2 – Suggested surf break provisions

The following policy was developed by ARC to inform their draft Regional Policy Statement. Although this policy has not been notified, it has been developed by experts in the field of surf breaks and is considered to be a robust policy covering all aspects of protection inherent to surf breaks. The policy has been further tweaked as a result of the study, as a guide for including such provisions in similar planning documents:

Policy X: Protecting surf breaks

*"The natural character, landscape, seascape, recreational, **social, cultural**, amenity, and economic values of regionally significant surf breaks shall be maintained and enhanced by taking into account any existing and potential effects of activities on land, in fresh water ways, estuarine systems or in the coastal marine area on access to, and use and enjoyment of surf breaks identified in Schedule X, including effects on water quality, and on any coastal processes, currents, water levels, seabed morphology and swell corridors that contribute to surf breaks."*

- Complementing the above policy or included within it, the following policy could be used to protect identified surf breaks:

Policy XX: Surf breaks of regional significance

*"Protect surf breaks of regional significance, **including** those listed in Schedule X, by:*

- (a) ensuring that activities in the coastal environment do not adversely affect the surf breaks; and*
 - (b) avoid adverse effects of other activities on access to, and use and enjoyment of the surf breaks."*
- Surf breaks should also be incorporated in other provisions regarding natural character, natural features and natural landscapes, allocating public space within the coastal marine area, and public access.

RPS Methods:

- RPS policy shall be implemented by Regional Plans and District Plans.
- Develop and establish baseline environmental monitoring in conjunction with local communities and recognised local organisations.

RPS Methods – Non-statutory:

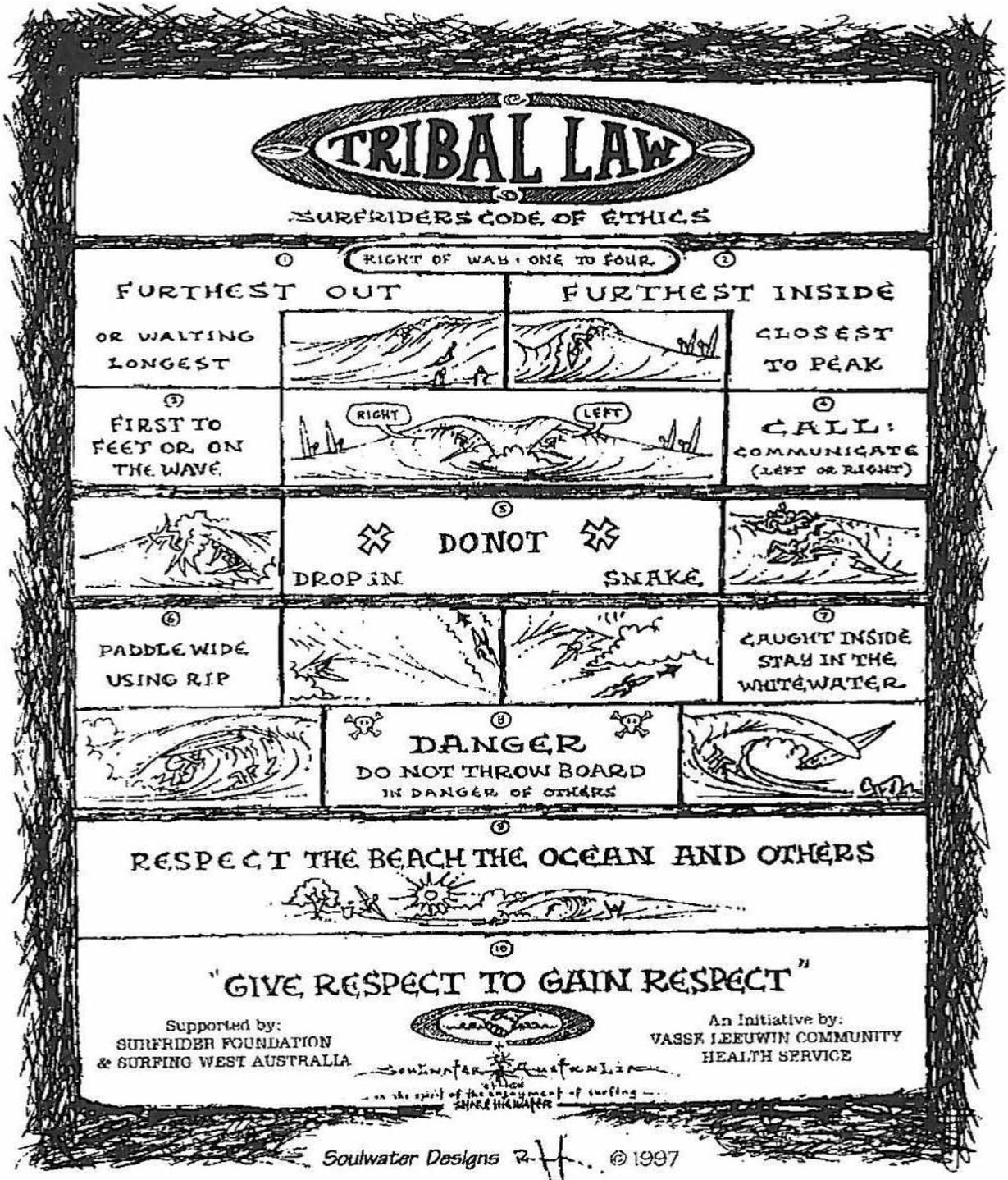
- Symbolic mapping of surf breaks as distinctive landscapes and seascapes to encourage visioning and ownership (e.g. surfing reserves).
- Regional growth strategies to prevent inappropriate subdivision, use and development of the coastal environment (e.g. Papakainga/Low-impact urban development design rules in District plans).

RPS Appendix:

- Adopt the surf break assessment criteria for identifying the outstanding characteristics, features and values of other surf breaks (upon their recognition) for their subsequent inclusion in 'Schedule X'.
- Develop and establish surf break assessment criteria into a guide for EIA on surf breaks.

Appendix 3 – The tribal law (young, 2000)

A graphic example of the informal universal code of ethics for surfers.



Appendix 4 – Surfers path article on surfing reserves

OUT
OF
THE
BLUE

SURF PRESERVATION – 5 TAKES

TAKE 1: HAWAIIAN CONFUSION

Why would anyone oppose the protection of ancient surf breaks?

Last issue we mentioned the ups and downs of Senator Fred Hemmings' attempt to have certain parts of Hawaii designated Surfing Reserves. Hemmings – a surf legend as well as a senator – was hoping to end his long political career in the Hawaii State Legislature with a symbolic, non-contentious bill that would simply enshrine Waikiki and the North Shore as places of importance in the history and future practice of Hawaiian surfing.

The bill passed all hurdles until at the very last minute the Democrats (Hemmings is a Republican) stopped it for reasons that seemed more personal than anything else.

No worries, Republican Governor Lingle was on hand to invoke special powers and, kawabunga, the bill suddenly passed. All those in favour cheered

the obvious good sense of the Governor, and boo-hissed those who opposed the bill. "Democrats are against surfing!" they cried.

Not according to one of the main opponents of the bill, Save Our Surf, headed by a surf legend of similar stature, George Downing. In an article published in *The Ocean* magazine, Downing insists that his decades-long feud with Senator Hemmings is not the issue. It's about Average Joe surfer v commercial interests and contests.

"Last winter," wrote Downing, "60% of the good, warning level surf, was allocated to surf contests. This effectively shut out the lifeblood of our sport, the 'recreational' surfer."

SOS and others objected to the inclusion of the words "competitive surfing" in the bill, for instance that the bill is for: "The promotion of the long-term preservation of Hawaii surfing for recreation and competitive surfing." According to opponents, the enshrinement of these areas specifically for competitive surfing would set up a conflict between the average recreational surfer and commercial



The Senator (left) fights with The Duke (right) over the bill.

interests. If competition was as important in the law as weekend fun, what chance do recreational surfers stand against surf companies taking over the waves every weekend, or every time there's a good swell?

They asked for three amendments (removing "competitive surfing" from three places) "to ensure that the people of Hawaii are not put in conflict with surf contest promoters".

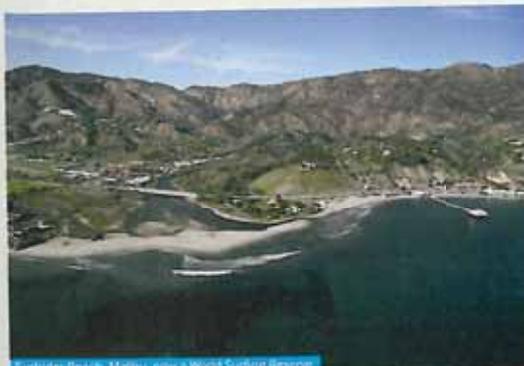
According to Downing, the backers of the bill refused, proving that far from being 'symbolic', this was in fact a stealth attempt to promote the promoters and ensure that commercial interests had as much right to a break as the

average Hawaiian recreational surfer. "All Hawaii's surf communities are concerned with the large number of surf contests now," he writes, adding that the inclusion of the competitive surfing clauses "represents a stepping stone to more contests."

Hard to disagree with, isn't it? Should waves be protected as much for contests as for the recreational surfer? Do 'We The People' have more right to waves than Mountain Dew, or Monster Energy or Quik or Bong? When you consider these minutiae, the whole concept of surfing reserves suddenly gets a more confusing and complicated.

And, just to add to the confusion, supporters of Ms Lingle and Mr Hemmings now say that they *did* take the offending words out of the bill before it became law.

Either way, it's clear that while preserving spots for future generations is universally accepted as good thing, we might have to watch out for exactly how we preserve them.



Surfrider Beach, Malibu, now a World Surfing Reserve.

TAKE 2: MALIBU

First on the WSR list, "the 'bu' gets enshrinement.

The World Surfing Reserves movement will make its first move in October when it designates Malibu's Surfrider Beach as its first protected surf spot. Enshrinement by the WSR is different to designation by say, the Hawaii State Legislature. The WSR, being a non-governmental organization, has no legal control over surf spots, but it can firmly establish the surf and local community's desire for a spot to be protected. WSR plans to

enshrine numerous surf breaks around the world but Malibu was seen as a fitting first one. "Malibu makes any shortlist of the world's most famous beaches," says Michael Blum, President of the Malibu Surfing Association. The WSR is "the UNESCO of surfing" aiming to "educate the world on the tremendous universal value of waves and surf zones", and is a partnership of Save The Waves, National Surfing Reserves Australia, the International Surfing Association (ISA) and Stanford University's Center for Responsible Travel (CREST).
worldsurfingreserves.org



The WAR report outlines the value of surf spots for non-surfers. This shot of Broadbeach, Queensland – now on a living range – should be enough for the rest of us.

TAKE 3: WAR REPORT SAS lays it all out, so planners can't ignore it.

Seems like the issue of wave protection is a hot one everywhere. And that's a good thing if it helps non-surfers and decision-makers to understand what the heck we're talking about.

In the UK, Surfers Against Sewage recently launched the "WAR Report". (Waves As Resources) which states their case

for protecting and preserving our surf. The report covers the science of waves, the economic value of waves, offshore power generation, surfing reserves, surf spot access and a lot more, all in a bid to not just outline SAS' positions, but to help planners understand why, for instance, a surf break that might be ruined by a new seawall shouldn't be. It's a thorough document based on solid research, but so simple even a developer could understand it.

It's worth a look and you can download it at the SAS and TSP websites.

TAKE 4: DOOLIN AND CRAB ISLAND An Irish gem comes under attack. Can you help?

The surfers of County Clare, Ireland need protection for their spots, now. They face a tough battle to safeguard two of the area's best waves, Crab Island and Doolin Point, now under threat after local planners approved a scheme to develop Doolin's small harbour into a ferry port. Surfers say it will threaten the waves and possibly even their own safety. The main issues are damage to Doolin, a sweet, punchy righthand point, which will be severely impacted, and there's fear that the port will change the way Crab Island breaks. Crab is the world-class big, barreling righthander that breaks just outside where the harbour will be. The new port will also force surfers to enter

and exit the water on a different side of the cove, which means paddling across the path of incoming and outgoing ferries.

This seems to be yet another case of planners and businesses completely ignoring the surfing element of the equation.

They need to read SAS's WAR Report, then propose the area as a World Surfing Reserve.

You can find out more and help support the surfers of Clare by signing the petition online at TSP's website or at <http://www.petitiononline.com/Doolin10/petition.html>



Crab and Doolin need protection.

TAKE 5: CLOUDBROKEN? Change in Fiji law opens up once-exclusive wave to all comers.

The Fijian surf resort Tavarua has for years benefited from exclusive access to the famously perfect waves, Cloudbreak and Restaurants. Until now the only way to surf those breaks was to stay at the four-grand-a-week resort which could do this thanks to an old Fijian law granting reef access and fishing rights to local chiefs. Tavarua could lease access rights to Cloudbreak from the area chiefs while the local community gets a healthy sum every year from the resort, plus numerous side benefits – like jobs. Now the Fijian federal government, pushing surf tourism, has made it illegal to block access to any of the nation's surf spots, Cloudbreak included.

The day after the new rules came in coincided with one of the best swells of the year and reports from the frontline described Cloudbreak as "a circus". Guests at Tavarua had to share the lineup with guests from Namotu, Plantation and other nearby surf resorts, or anyone who rocked up. The atmosphere, according to some reports, was tense. Of course, other reports say it was great, just a bit busy. The wider surf community, if the blogosphere is anything to go by, generally seems to approve of the move. There's concern that the area will become a "surf ghetto" like Nias and G-Land, and trash, pollution and damage to the reef by anchors need to be addressed, but the consensus seems to be that surf breaks should be open to everyone. Stay tuned, however. Indonesia is said to soon be implementing a law that grants exclusive reef rights to small-island surf resorts all across the archipelago. More on that as it unfolds ...



Sharing sucks doesn't it? Cloudbreak, a crowd before the crowds.

Appendix 5 – Community Engagement Plan

Development of criteria for identifying the different values of surf breaks to feed into break protection policy.

Introduction

Coastal planning and coastal science experts have begun developing a criteria-set for identifying a range of values associated with surf breaks. The criteria-set is to serve its primary purpose as a means for identifying the qualities and inherent characteristics of different surf breaks.

Public Engagement Objectives

The objectives of the public engagement are to:

- Engage the key partners, tangata whenua and communities of the Gisborne District and Bay of Plenty region effectively in the preparation of planning provisions for protecting surf breaks in both regions. This includes:
 - development of a robust criteria-set for identifying surf breaks;
 - identifying elements of natural character that are intrinsic to each surf break in the regions, and their associated community values; and
 - Identify the desired outcomes for protecting these breaks.
- Engender community ownership of the objectives for surf break protection.
- Ensure a range of interests are represented during discussions and in the resultant provisions.
- Ensure consultation methods meet the needs of the communities.
- Engage key stakeholder groups/affected parties in the process from inception.

Principles of Public Engagement

The following principles are core in the preparation of planning provisions for protecting surf breaks in the regions, and staff are committed to putting these into practice:

- Ensure adequate time for contributions from key partners and communities;
- Remain open at all times to input from key partners and communities;
- Ensure engagement suits the needs of key partners and communities;
- Show respect for all people seeking to engage in development of the engagement objectives;
- Follow principles of tikanga Māori;
- Inform key partners and communities of outcomes of engagement;
- Actively encourage contributions from key partners and communities;

- Demonstrate integrity in your work; and
- Embrace a culture of learning – commit to continuous improvement and adaptation to key information received during the engagement process and remain open to feedback on the overall process.

Public Engagement Methods

To ensure full engagement with a range of interests and meets community needs, a range of methods of public engagement will be used as appropriate to the context and methodology as it develops:

- Focus groups/workshops.
- Interviews.
- Hui.
- Surveys (potentially online – survey monkey).
- Advise public on the process and timeframes for submitting on RPSs and Plans. Public advertisement of participation opportunities.
- Media (e.g. council web pages, displays).

Communication methods

- Community notices on relevant radio stations, BOPFM.
- Newspaper articles in Gisborne Herald, Bay of Plenty Times.
- Articles in GDC publications, BOPRC Backyard region wide publication.
- Flyers and posters at key events and locations (surf shops).
- Direct contact with known stakeholders, communities and other potential interests (e.g. email, telephone, mail).

Appendix 6 – Consultation record

Public Workshops

Format for workshops

Workshops were hosted by the Bay of Plenty Region Council to invite the participation of the public in this study. The details of the workshops were as follows:

Mount Maunganui Workshop: Mount Maunganui Surf Lifesaving Club,
6.30 – 9.00pm, 12 January, 2011

Present – Ned Nicely – Parks Officer Tauranga City Council, Mel Clarke – Christian Surfers, Paul and Jan Shanks – Surfbreak Protection Society, Craig and Sue Hadfield, Paul Hickson – Te Puke Fast Forward, Anthony Olsen - Tuwharetoa, Hamiora Faulkner – Ngati Kuku, Jonathon York – Omanu Surf Life Saving, Brie Sherow – ASR Ltd intern, Bailey Peryman, Matt Skellern. Total attendance: 13

Whakatane Workshop: Committee Room 1, Whakatane Office
Bay of Plenty Regional Council
6.30 – 8.30pm, 13 January, 2011

Graeme O'Rourke – BOPRC, John Douglas - BOPRC, Nassah Steed - BOPRC, Beaver Porter, Craig Julian, James Bourne, Ross Anderson, Mark Diews, Craig and Patrick Lambert, Brie Sherow – ASR Ltd, Bailey Peryman, Matt Skellern. Total attendance: 13

The workshops had three aims:

- a) Introduce respondents to the study, the background for surf break protection in the New Zealand Resource Management context and how they can be involved.
- b) identify suitable approaches to identify, manage and protect surf breaks
- c) Identify surf breaks of regional significance in the Bay of Plenty area

A hard copy of the workshop agenda and community feedback form were distributed to respondents upon arrival. Respondents filled in their name and contact details on a sign-in sheet provided.

Content presented

The content of the presentation at both workshops focused on:

- a) Background to the development of surf break protection in the New Zealand Resource Management context and the issues to consider.
- b) Surf break identification within planning provisions; the *Wavetrack Guide* as a legitimate starting point; the inclusion of breaks not in the *Wavetrack Guide*
- c) Introducing the Surf Break Assessment Criteria for determining regionally significant values of surf breaks.
- d) The overall process for protecting surf breaks as the primary purpose of the study

Raising Public Awareness

Workshops were advertised to the general public through a range of methods, materials used are included in Appendix 7. Approximately 200 Fliers and posters were placed in shops, retail outlets and public spaces generally related to surfing communities, the surfing industry and public contact points for each workshop.

Three BOPRC media releases were sent out four weeks in advance of the workshops, on the eve of the workshops, and within a week of holding workshops. All local papers ran these stories. Two sound bytes were taken for radio one from Newstalk ZB that went out to radio networks and one from 1XX in Whakatane.

Initial contacts were established through individuals, groups and organisations known to BOPRC staff. Through a 'snow-balling technique', further individuals, groups and organisations were subsequently identified and contacted. This contact consisted largely of phone calls and emails, some of which led to face-to-face meetings. All contacts were given a basic introduction to the study, an invitation to be involved in the workshops and a request to both host and/or provide further information to assist the project.

Summary of responses from workshop

Identifying a surf break

Let identification be simple to begin with as effective spatial definition of surf breaks in maps requires further investigation.

Respondents generally lack the understanding required to effectively engage with statutory processes – e.g. the reality that the onus is on the individual or group to participate in order to have their surf break interests considered. The next step of submitting and the speaking to this at a hearing is a considerable undertaking for the lay-person.

Targeted community engagement is required to ensure the information gathered reflects local interests.

General support for the 'Red, Amber, Green' zoning of surf breaks. This was deemed a good way of indicating to Councils: 'there is something here to consider, you need to find out more'.

Wavetrack Guide identifies a wide range of breaks whether locals like it or not and is a legitimate starting point for the identification of surf breaks. This leads to a noticeable amount of non-local surfers arriving at and surfing eastern-BOP breaks.

Respondents accepted the greater prominence of the *Wavetrack Guide* versus that of any planning documents containing information on surf breaks culturally sensitive to public exposure – respondents collectively agree not to ID breaks beyond those already known in the *Wavetrack Guide* primarily for their own cultural reasons (as their "special places").

Respondents agree identification of breaks in plans is prudent where risks are known or perceived to be at least potential.

Wavetrack Guide focuses on physical knowledge of breaks leaving aside cultural norms and values according to locals. Tensions arise when visiting parties do not show due respect to the culture of the place generally considered central to surfing etiquette.

The concept of a 'nursery break' is an accurate term to use when identifying surf breaks like Ohope's West End and the broad types of recreational needs they provide.

Respondents discussed options around identifying breaks in plans. It was agreed that the strengths of identification is allowing a more proactive approach to preserving important community values.

Respondents recognised the parallels with protection of waahi tapu and the cultural sensitivity of identifying secret spots. For those connected to sacred sites, the question is determining the weight of the perceived threat of development versus the risk of public exposure and subsequent desecration.

Surf Break Assessment Criteria

There may be a need for weightings to distinguish certain criteria is more important than others. This could be done by asking surfers to rate the importance of individual criteria.

Separating the evaluation of overall wave quality/consistency as most important and using a separate assessment of other factors as values and characteristics more relevant to the specific features that make a break significant.

Not all criteria are applicable at every break and therefore when rating breaks, values may become separated from the local context of the break in question by attempting to determine values that are not relevant.

Criteria could be more effective as a guidance tool, rather than a checklist, for assessing the significance of a break. Criteria were referred to as a useful way to define the certain characteristics of a surf break to assist highlighting its value.

Criteria are too complex for the lay-person to apply and thus, there is a need to ask questions of the criteria itself. A more appropriate question might be: 'what is it that surfers value about their breaks?'

There needs to be room for comments in the assessment of a break beyond simply assigning numerical values (i.e. qualitative analysis).

Tangata Whenua relate a considerable level of cultural significance to the history of surfing, recreation in the coastal environment and the necessity of wave-riding as part of gathering seafood. This may be recognised in iwi management plans (currently and potentially) and would add depth to any statutory document or justification for surf break protection.

The economic benefits of surf break use to the community are recognised as a significant value and worthy of consideration within criteria. However, primarily it is understood as a means to supporting the lifestyle and culture derived from surf break use. One respondent even claimed that if he was aware of his business adversely affecting the local surfing community at his local break then he would 'pull the pin on it in a heartbeat'.

The social aspects of surfing are supported by formal education. 'Surf schools' are an example of this where students not only learn to surf, but about the norms, the etiquette and fostering the spirit of surfing.

"Surfing is about the cultural aspect, the family aspect, the love and the memories – all things that [respondents] want to pass on to their grandkids. It is who we are."

The *fun* aspect of surfing is largely what it is all about. It is up to planners to facilitate this.

The relative naturalness of our coastline is something that we don't quite realise the significance of. Being proactive about protecting what is precious about it is important.

The overall process for protecting surf breaks and purpose of the study

That a more targeted survey may be more effective in getting a wide response on key questions in the study. Information about the study and the workshops should be included with this.

The need to consider a broader demographic, particularly youth.

In general, Ngati Kuku is supportive of any measures to protect the coastal environment.

That surfers and students in general do not understand 'process' and how to gain support for your ideas by influencing the right people.

That there is a long way to go and a lot of hard work to come before this study is successful.

That there is a disconnection between theory drafted in the 'ivory towers' and the reality of practical implementation amongst the generally discerning modern-day public in NZ.

During individual introductions, respondents all spoke passionately about their interest and place in the local surfing community and how the topic of the study resonated as important and something they ought to take some ownership and responsibility for by being involved.

Respondents expressed thanks for the opportunity to take part in the workshop.

A large emphasis was placed on the significance of surf breaks as a playground for friends and family, a strong sense of well-being and community values that developed in connection to these 'special places'. The significance of this culture and the 'awesome' lifestyle it enables was something respondents could not stress enough. "You can always crack a smile at West End". That it is a great place to raise your kids as a result. As respondents joked about the importance of surfing for one's mental stability, one commented in all seriousness how he works hard all week and the "surf is the fun in my life".

Removal of a surf break may mean removal of a significant chunk of a local workforce that is there for the community-orientated lifestyle a significant surf break supports. That may have a considerable impact on the local economy through an absence of skills and expertise. Surfers are doctors, lawyers, builders, teachers – from all walks of life. The progression of surf culture from lay-about, dope-smoking, dole-bludger has changed. One quoted "the Bar (Whakatane Heads) is the only thing keeping me and my family here, otherwise we would move to Gisborne for waves".

With whom does the responsibility for monitoring fall with? Who resources this? How do you establish baselines, particularly for wave quality?

The influence of local and national-level politicians as decision makers was discussed and the contact or experience respondents have had with such high-profile figures in relation to surfing.

Respondents recognised the need to consider 'the four well-beings' in surf break policy or the evaluation of any form of significance.

Respondents recognised upstream effects and the potential for flow-on impacts from decisions made concerning the mixing zone where a surf break exists.

Key Workshop Outcomes

The surf break assessment criteria and how they are applied was the focus of the Mount work shop. This was highly constructive in developing the criteria, their effectiveness and appropriate application.

Identification of surf breaks and their associated values and characteristics using the ARC model is too reductionist. The *Wavetrack Guide* is a legitimate starting point for identifying surf breaks and their values. This should focus on the physical qualities of a wave then use optional criteria to guide identification of other outstanding features and characteristics that are applicable to a surf break. Determining these values will create an overall picture of which breaks are regionally significant and why. A qualitative aspect, or narrative, is important in this process.

Surf breaks are a finite natural resource for a high and diverse range of recreational users and a focal point for values that span 'the four well-beings'. These values support a healthy, community and family-based lifestyle that develops into a respect for each other, the environment and a sense of responsibility for preserving the integrity of the coastal environment.

Implementation of surf break policy requires a greater understanding of the factors that determine the spatial extent of a break. For the overall purpose of implementing surf break policy, accurate spatial mapping also requires the ability for definitions to address a high level of variation both within a region *and* each surf break location i.e. different characteristics will require varying responses that are site specific.

The workshops function well for educating respondents on a range of issues including: informing people about how they can get involved with council processes; surf break preservation policy and the onus on local interests to step forward and engage, rather than waiting to be asked; and that community engagement is a two-way thing and the more communities recognise this, the more effective Council-public relationships will become.

Identifying 'regionally significant' surf breaks was not about establishing a hierarchy of breaks in comparison with one another; instead being about defining the particular characteristics that make a break or stretch of beach valuable to the region. Thus, the importance of a robust criteria-set for guiding the evaluation of a break, ultimately leading to identification of a representative range of surf breaks for the region.

In terms of future management under the RMA of regionally significant surf breaks, detail should come at plan level, under the direction of the RPS.

Targeted interviews

Targeted interviews were carried out with a cross section of key figures from both the surfing community and surfing industry. The schedule in Appendix 9 is drafted primarily on input from these interviews.

The aim of interviews was to identify surf breaks in the Bay of Plenty using the Wavetrack Guide as a starting point and the surf break assessment criteria as a guide for determining the outstanding characteristics and features of these breaks. Respondents were also invited to identify further breaks not in the guide at their discretion and comment freely on what makes each break unique.

Interviewees:

Jonette Mead (JM)	Personal residence, Mount Maunganui, 31 January, 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm
Matt Hall (MH)	Bodyline Factory (135 Totara Street, Mount Maunganui), 1 February, 10.30 am -12.00 pm.
Mike Smith (MS)	RPM Factory (22 Macdonald Street, Mount Maunganui), 1 February, 12.00 pm - 1.00 pm.
Tony Ogilvy (TO)	Personal residence, Ohope Beach, 1 February, 3.30 pm - 5.00 pm.
Craig and Sue Hadfield (CSH)	Personal residence, Mount Maunganui, 1 February, 7.00 pm - 8.30 pm.
Graeme O'Rourke (GOR)	Whakatane Office, Bay of Plenty Regional Council, 2 February, 10.00 am - 12.00 pm.

Key Targeted Interviews Outcomes

The outcomes of these interviews contributed directly to formulation of the 'Schedule of Significant Surf Breaks'. The following are general issues and comments raised during interviews:

- All: Each of the respondents commented on the concept of local rights to talk about surf breaks and the similarities to hapu reserving comment for their rohe only.
- JM: That the surfing community is large, but does not have a strong voice in the sense of being *able* to engage with statutory processes.
- JM: Through such high participation, use of surf breaks has become imprinted on our culture with a massive economic ripple effect, benefits for social capacity and overall environmental awareness. Therefore we must preserve all coastlines and the breaks as natural gathering points and source of some uncanny natural buzz.
- JM/GOR/TO: Surfing brings out the fun in people that is so hard to find sometimes – it is invigorating at any age or skill level. When you surf you become part of a very unique, tribal sub-culture. The point of difference for surf break users is this utter dependence on the fickle dynamics of the natural environment.
- JM/GOR: As much as surfing is an individualistic pursuit there is a lot of camaraderie as a grass-roots activity that we don't often show. Despite this, surfing has a massive influence on our social constructs, behaviours and consumer choices. That perhaps what is misunderstood from a non-surfer's perspective are the core values and culture that surfers appreciate. This is often lost when employed for commercial gain and applies to any cultural phenomena.

- GOR: Surfing is a growing world phenomenon due to the simple, healthy family lifestyle it revolves around. This is something already very much engrained in our 'kiwiana' beach-life and includes a massively diverse range of beach recreation.
- GOR: Education is necessary to mitigate the increasing pressures on breaks and maintain the vibe – this is seated on mutual respect for each other, the environment and the local context this occurs within.
- MH: On the criteria for wave consistency – 'every dog has its day' and this is difficult to factor in when averaging a complex range of variation in surfable conditions.
- CSH: The need to refine and potentially split the wave consistency criteria to account for differences in how consistency is perceived by different users. This is best exemplified by the split between the standard of surfable wave required for 'grommets' (see Glossary) versus the higher expectations or standards for more experienced surfers.
- TO: Agricultural and Forestry land uses have a huge impact on the coastal environment which has intensified in the last 10-15 years. This is evident in increased levels of siltation and debris coming out of the rivers.
- MS: There is localised crew in the Newdicks, Maketu, Pukehina area.
- CSH: Surfers return to waves outside their 'local' waves because they feel some sort of kin with it.

Other formal engagement

Tauranga City Council

Matt Skellern met with Tauranga City Council Planners and surfers James Jacobs (also President of Bay Boardriders Club) and Dylan Makgill in late December 2010. They discussed possible approaches for running the workshop and made some general suggestions about local issues to be aware of. Local contacts within the surf industry were also provided.

ASR Ltd

Matt Skellern and I discussed the study with ASR Intern, Brie Sherow who subsequently attended both workshops. A discussion was held with James Frazerhurst (ASR Staff Member) about the connection between her study (mapping NZ surf breaks and other relevant spatial data) and my study. Issues rose considering a key point of this study, being the need for more robust criteria for mapping surf breaks. Another issue was the accuracy of the target audience for public engagement and the discrepancy between contacts within the surfing *industry* versus contacts in the surfing *community*. The 'industry' being more the competitive and commercial sector of surfers (indicated as perhaps only 5-10% of known 'surfers') and the general recreational surfing community (the rest). The total number of surfers is known to be roughly 80,000 via a survey conducted by Surfing NZ a few years ago. Overall, the surfing industry and the surfing community are two completely different things motivated by different interests (profit versus cultural values – family, friends and fun). This correlates to strong sentiments expressed by respondents during both workshops, justifying the need to protect a diversity of surf break values.

Ngati Awa

Beverley Hughes (Manager, Environment Ngati Awa) has communicated a specific set of interests concerning the break that falls within their rohe at Whakatane Heads. Maintenance, enhancement and avoidance of establishment of structures where these would adversely affect the surf break are promoted. Concerns were expressed specifically in relation to a project being undertaken by Whakatane District Council which is considering options for

improvement of the navigable safety of the Whakatane River mouth. Many of those options involve the establishment of structures in or affecting the existing surf break.

The surf break is therefore one of the matters Ngati Awa hold concerns for in terms of that project. They also note that access to this surf break is usually gained by paddling across the river mouth from the eastern side of the river mouth near or at the car park at Whakatane Heads. This has raised navigation and safety concerns. Similar concerns have been raised in development of the Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy regarding surfers paddling over to Panepane Point on Matakana Island to get to Puni's Farm. Access along the beach is also available provided surfers do **not** cut through the Opihi Urupa land (an ancient burial ground at Piripai Spit), but rather walk along the beach from Coastlands.

Mrs Hughes has also communicated a range of valuable views on the wording and suitability of the assessment criteria. These views are generally supportive of the criteria. However, she pointed to other criteria that could be used in the assessment of outstanding features in sections of the Proposed Bay of Plenty RPS that may be applied to surf breaks.

Jonnie Mead – Well known local surf personality

Jonnie Mead contributed her views on the role of surf breaks as providing a focal point for well-developed social constructs. She presents evidence of this construct being used in social marketing efforts aimed at changing behaviour, commodity sales and enhanced product meaning through the promotion of cool, or healthy lifestyles. This often employs imagery from very visual action sports of which surfing is a highly respected discipline. The respondent feels surfing has a broader reach socially than just the realm of exploitive use of 'cool constructs' seeing as a wide range of ages take part in surfing with 3rd and 4th generation surfers being common. The respondent believes surf breaks in New Zealand have become gathering points for surfers to participate, catch up, encourage young learner surfers, hold contests, and hang out. That "they provide a kind of loom from which the social fabric and culture of surfing and surfers is woven". The respondent feels surf breaks are the national parks of surfing and are identified by the user group in a way that relies on undeveloped beach fronts and weather patterns that over many years have preserved the sand banks at these favourite and historic breaks.

Ned Nicely – Parks Officer, Tauranga City Council

Ned Nicely attended the workshop and he also attended a meeting with the author and Matt Skellern. In summary, he was critical of the presentation and had some constructive comments to offer for gaining influence and capturing the attention of the masses. He warned off the discerning nature of the NZ public and the need for a broad, well-rounded vision for what surf break protection is aiming to achieve – given the subject was likely to become popular and exposed to wider media coverage. In particular, he emphasised the need to recognise the place of surfing and surf breaks as a significant form of recreation with many positive qualities for the physical and mental health for people of all ages and walks of life.

Feedback Forms

Written feedback forms were received from Beaver Porter, Paul Hickson and Ned Nicely that were considered as part of the study.

Appendix 7 – Consultation material

Public Workshop Feedback Form Bay of Plenty Surf Break Study - January 2011 - Feedback Form

Introduction

The purpose of this feedback form is to assist a Lincoln University study that is developing methods for including surf breaks in planning policy, with the Bay of Plenty being used as a case study. The study comes as a result of new national coastal policy under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), which provides for the protection and preservation of surf breaks in our country.

To complete a robust case study in the BOP, information is required from surfers that have experience with their local breaks. This will allow the research to correctly identify the characteristics of BOP surf breaks, and ensure factors making them important to the local surfing community are accurately understood.

The information you provide in the feedback form will be used for the study. Once complete, it will be available for policy makers, surfing groups or individuals to use as a guide for developing surf break policy.

Instructions for Completing the Feedback Form:

- Step 1:** A Surf break Assessment Criteria is included below. Please start by reading the criteria.
- Step 2:** On the table attached, rate each criteria out of 10 for each surf break you have knowledge of.
- Step 3:** Total your ratings for each break in the last column to see which waves in the BOP rate the highest.

Notes:

- We have included the breaks identified in the 'Wavetrack Guide', but have added rows at the bottom of the table for breaks that may not be included in the guide that you also want to assess.

- When you consider values of breaks, make sure you compare them with your experiences of other breaks in the BOP. This is important, as the case study needs to determine the characteristics and values of surfing specific to the BOP region, not in comparison to the rest of the country or overseas for example.

- Step 4:** Please add any other comments about BOP surf breaks that you think is important for the study. Any general comments on the Surf Break Assessment Criteria and any comments on the study and workshop, suggesting possible ways this could be improved.

Returning your Feedback Forms

Feel free to complete the forms at the workshop.

Alternatively, take them away and return with the freepost envelope provided, or mail to Bay of Plenty Regional Council, PO Box 364, Whakatane, 3158, Attn Matt Skellern. Or you can scan and email them back to

bailey.peryman@lincolnuni.ac.nz

Please complete feedback forms and return to us by **January 31, 2011**

Thank you very much for your participation in supporting the study.

Surf Break Assessment Criteria

1. **Wave quality** (height, shape, length etc.) when optimum conditions are present.
2. **Frequency/consistency** of surfable conditions. Sites which are able to be surfed more frequently throughout the year are rated higher than those which only break rarely. This may also consider added value for the consistency of high quality surfing days.
3. **Size or diversity of break area.** Based on whether the break can accommodate many surfers at once. This may also consider added value for breaks where several surfable areas may be present at any one time given suitable conditions (i.e. offering immediate alternatives to lessen the impact of crowds or cater for varying skill levels).
4. **Landscape/Seascape Character.** Indicates the value of the surrounding landscape in contributing to the overall surfing experience. May consider factors such as the wilderness experience from the natural surroundings, remoteness or the 'mission' involved in getting to the break, water quality, or the presence of a unique urban or rural village, town or general establishment.
5. **Rarity or representativeness.** Relates to whether the break is a rare type of break for the region. Ratings are based on how common a type of break is (headland or point, beach, bar, reef or ledge) within the region i.e. the least common type of break gets the highest rarity rating. May also consider the significance of a break when rare, high quality wave conditions occur (i.e. if it only breaks once a year, but when it does, it's a 'drop tools wave')
6. **Level of use.** How popular is it, how many people surf it.
7. **Amenities.** Reflects ease of access, presence of ancillary services and facilities (e.g. surf clubs, toilets, car parks, shelters, access-ways to beach, nearby accommodation and shops). Some breaks are valued for their proximity to facilities and services. Sites with greater range of such facilities are rated higher than those with few facilities.
8. **Public Access.** Fundamental to the use of any surf break. The more secure the access the higher the rating. Not necessarily a value defined by the 'ease of access'. Security of informal access (e.g. across a farm/private land) may also be considered.
9. **Significance to the local community.** Relates to whether the break is a key aspect contributing to the local or cultural sense of place. May also consider significance to a local economy.
10. **Value as a national/internationally recognised site.** Based on whether the break is significant as a competition site or for attracting tourists (surfing and general).
11. **Vulnerability.** Presence of existing threats to an existing harmony or equilibrium affecting the overall significance of the break. The higher or more established a threat is, the higher the rating.

Surf break Criteria Assessment rating sheet (0-lowest, 10-highest)											
<i>Name of Surf Break</i>	<i>Wave quality</i>	<i>Frequency/ Consistency</i>	<i>Size/ diversity of break area</i>	<i>Landscape Seascape Character</i>	<i>Rarity/ Representativeness</i>	<i>Level of use</i>	<i>Amenities</i>	<i>Significance to local community</i>	<i>Nat/Intl recognised break</i>	<i>Vulnerability</i>	Total
Orokawa Bay											
Waihi											
Bowentown											
N. Matakana											
Matakana											
Main Beach											
Tay Street											
Arataki											
Papamoa											
Kaituna											
Motiti Island											
Maketu											
Newdicks											
Little Waihi											
Pukehina											
Matata											
Airports/ Dunedin											
Whakatane											
Heads											
Ohope											
Opotiki											
Torere											
Hawai											
Maraenui											
Motu River											
Hariki Beach											
Waihou Bay											
Additional Breaks											

Surf Break Workshop

Your local knowledge about the Bay's surf breaks is needed



PHOTO COURTESY OF ESTRADA PHOTO

Bay of Plenty Regional Council and Gisborne District Council are supporting a study of surf breaks in our region.

Come to a workshop to:

- Identify the issues for surf breaks in the Bay and why they are important to you
- Identify which surf breaks should be preserved in the Bay
- Learn more about the study

When 12 January 2011, 6:30pm - 8:00pm

Where Mount Maunganui Surf Life Saving Club
21 Adams Avenue, Mount Maunganui

**Want to know more? Call Matt Skellern 0800 368 267,
or email matt.skellern@envbop.govt.nz**

*Working with our communities for a better environment
E mahi ngatahi e pai ake ai te taiao*



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Surf Break Workshop

Your local knowledge about the Bay's surf breaks is needed



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TONY OGLIVY

Bay of Plenty Regional Council and Gisborne District Council are supporting a study of surf breaks in our region.

Come to a workshop to:

- Identify the issues for surf breaks in the Bay and why they are important to you
- Identify which surf breaks should be preserved in the Bay
- Learn more about the study

When 13 January 2011, 6:30pm - 8:00pm

Where Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Committee Room One,
5 Quay Street, Whakatane

**Want to know more? Call Matt Skellern 0800 368 267,
or email matt.skellern@envbop.govt.nz**

*Working with our communities for a better environment
E mahi ngatahi e pai ake ai te taiao*



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Appendix 8 – Surf break assessment criteria

NB: this is the final resolution of the criteria set for assessing the features, characteristics and values of surf breaks in the Bay of Plenty.

Compulsory Criteria

1. **Wave Quality** (height, shape and length of ride). Performance of the surf break in optimum conditions – rate out of 10 in comparison to other breaks in the region, 10 being highest.
2. **Break type** (reef break, point break, ledge, river mouth or beach break). How representative is the surf break is in terms of its type in the region, i.e. is it a common type of surf break within the region or is it rare.
3. **Consistency of surfable** (surfable wave conditions of any quality) *and/or* **high quality surfable** (surfable wave conditions at or near full potential) waves – rate out of 10 in comparison to other breaks in the region, 10 being highest.

Optional Criteria

4. **Size or diversity of break area.** How many recreational users the break can accommodate at once and where a break offers several surfable areas at any one time given suitable conditions.
5. **Naturalness/Scenery.** The contribution of the surrounding natural landscape toward the enjoyment of the surfing and overall recreational experience.
6. **Level of use.** How regularly the break is used for recreation. This applies to the breaks suitability for a range of users from beginner to advanced levels in terms of all activities that use the break, including, but not limited to surfers, surf life saving, kite boarding, canoeists and paddle boards.
7. **Amenity value and access.** Value of the break for its ease-of-access, proximity to a township, associated facilities, services and other amenities (e.g. surf clubs, toilets, car parks, shelters, nearby accommodation and shops). This category also includes the users of surf breaks as a part of the seascape, in providing amenity value for onlookers.
8. **Local community and competition.** Influence of a break on the social fabric of the surf community and the health and well-being associated with surf-riding (e.g. family-orientated lifestyle, local economic activity, surf training and competition). Includes the significance of a surf break as a contest venue for surf competition.
9. **Value as a national/internationally recognised break.** The significance of a break beyond the region for a wider domestic or international range of users, interests or audience – for general tourism and/or purposes specific to surf-riding.
10. **Cultural values.** Consideration of culturally significant values. This includes tikanga Māori (particularly where practiced in the coastal environment); and, the arrival, growth and evolution of 'modern' surf culture from Hawaiian and Californian influences (including surf lifesaving).

Appendix 9 – Schedule and description of regionally significant surf breaks

Schedule of regionally significant surf breaks

Surf breaks were identified from the Wavetrack Guide and from community engagement. They are ordered geographically from west to east.

- Orokawa Bay
- Waihi Beach (North End)
- Bowentown
- North Matakana
- Matakana Island (Puni's Farm)
- North West Rock
- Main Beach
- Shark Alley
- Mount Coast (east of Rabbit Island – Omanu)
- Arataki (off Girven Road)
- Papamoa Beach ('the Domain')
- Motiti Island (east side)
- Kaituna Cut
- Maketu
- Newdicks Beach
- Little Waihi
- Pukehina Beach
- Matata Straights
- Tarawera Cut ('the Black Drain')
- Walkers Access ('Walkers', Walkers Rd)
- Thornton Beach
- Rangitaiki
- Airports
- Coastlands
- Whakatane Heads
- Ohope (Westend)
- Opotiki
- Torere
- Hawaii
- Maraenui
- Motu River Mouth
- Hariki Beach
- Waihou Bay

Description of regionally significant surf breaks

Notes:

- a) Final numerical ratings displayed in the description of each break are scaled to reflect the relative values of the criteria of wave quality, consistency and rarity. This is compulsory assessment criteria that can be attributed to any surf break. 10 is the highest value, 0 is the lowest.
- b) The description of each break is a brief summary of the values and characteristics of a break.
- c) Outstanding components are attributes taken from the optional assessment criteria that are unique to the surf break.

Orokawa Bay

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 7/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 5/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 8/10

Description:

Above average beach break resulting from geographically favourable with high scenic and naturalness values. Public walking track and sandy beach have high visual amenity for all users.

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 7 - Amenity value and access

Waihi Beach (North End)

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 6/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 5/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 2/10

Description:

Average beach break with a sand-bottom left at the northern end that breaks best more consistently than the eastern reaches of Waihi Beach. A vibrant local surfing community with a diverse break area suitable to a wide range of users. Popular spot with high amenity value across both services and the surrounding natural environment. Some significant cultural values associated with local surf lifesaving club and batches.

Outstanding components:

- 4 - Size or diversity of break area
- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 6 - Level of use
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 8 - Local community and competition
- 10 - Cultural values

Bowentown

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 6/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 5/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 3/10

Description: Average beach break with occasionally good waves dependent on sand bank formation influenced by rip formations and possibly related to the dynamics of the adjacent harbour. Harbour outlet has a lesser-known break. Local surfing community and holiday area presents a more laid back option to the bustle of the Mount.

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 8 - Local community and competition

North Matakana Island

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 3/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 6/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 1/10

Description: Average beach break with occasionally good waves dependent on sand bank formation influenced by rip formations and possibly related to the dynamics of the adjacent harbour. In the 'shadow' of the adjacent Puni's Farm (see below).

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery

Matakana Island (Puni's Farm)

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 10/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 8/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 2/10

Description: The pinnacle of surfing for the western Bay of Plenty. Outstanding beach break consistently producing the region's best surfable waves. Unique 'A-frame' wave form is highly dependent on the offshore wave-focusing feature created by the ebb tide delta of the Tauranga Harbour outlet in the swell corridor. The form of the ebb tide delta and the associated sediment budget of the area are considered critical to the quality of the surfing experience. Changes in the delta influence factors beyond the wave form including the safety of offshore 'parking' for craft used to access the break and the composition of onshore beach and dune systems. The break handles a high level of users and is suited to high performance surfing in optimum conditions. The island is a source of immense enjoyment, health and well-being for regular users. It has high scenic value and includes habitat for indigenous fauna which contribute to the surfing experience, contributing to its natural characteristics. The remoteness of the break contributes to a unique surfing experience which consistently attracts significant use and industry attention from beyond the study area. Access is largely by motorised craft or a risky paddle across the harbour mouth. This restrictive access is considered to be part of the 'mystique' of the break. The break hosts a highly significant local competition symbolic, known as the 'Island Masters' nationally renowned as a beach break of the highest quality, the break plays a significant role overlain the overall fabric of the surfing community in the Bay of Plenty, particularly for Mount Maunganui locals and surfing culture in this area.

Outstanding components:

- 4 - Size or diversity of break area
- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 6 - Level of use
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 8 - Local community and competition
- 9 - Value as a national/internationally recognised break
- 10 - Cultural values

North West Rock

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 6/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 2/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 10/10

Description: Rock/boulder ledge producing heavy right-hand break dependent on a narrow set of conditions. 'Freakish' wave form and limited in the range of use it offers, but unique as a rare and highly challenging surf break with a sense of mystique significant to the local surfing community. The break is located in the entrance of the Tauranga Harbour. It has high scenic value being located here, as it is accessed from the walkway on the western side of Mauāo and looks over to Matakana Island.

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery

Main Beach – Mount Maunganui

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 7/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 6/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 2/10

Description: Above average beach break consisting of 3 distinct breaks ('the Blowhole', centre break, west end break) amongst an otherwise typically variable beach break set up. The beach offers both challenging and fun waves for all levels of surf-riding ability. The particular geographical configuration of the land/seascape creates a unique setting with high visual amenity by the back drop of Mauāo, Moturiki Island, Rabbit Island and the Domain. Main Beach is an iconic inner city surf beach with a strong surf culture that resonates throughout the nearby CBD of Mount Maunganui with numerous surf stores and cafes. The break is popular with a diverse range of users. There are many public amenities, service and facilities surrounding the beach. Main Beach is a highly significant focal point for the health and well-being of the Mount Maunganui surfing community. This includes the local surf lifesaving club and the break is an important training ground and competition site for the club. The beach is also important to many other forms of surf based events including rowing, power boating, surf-riding and others. Significant at both at a local and regional scale for the surfing industry based here.

Outstanding components:

- 4 - Size or diversity of break area
- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 6 - Level of use
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 8 - Local community and competition
- 10 - Cultural values

Shark Alley

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 4/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 6/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 6/10

Description: Other than wave quality, Shark Alley is inseparable from the Main Beach and thus a subject to all the factors included in the description above. Shark Alley is highly significant learners break and for the development of surf-riding overall. These values also contribute to the social fabric of the local community. Shark Alley is also the location of two reef breaks, which are in its vicinity. One break is an offshore “bombie” (see Glossary for definition) that breaks right on a reef beside Rabbit Island. This is a big wave spot that very rarely breaks, requiring a 10ft swell to start working. On the other side of Rabbit Island is a fickle left hand reef break that only breaks on large swells.

Outstanding components:

- 4 - Size or diversity of break area
- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 6 - Level of use
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 8 - Local community and competition
- 10 - Cultural values

Mount Coast (east of Rabbit Island – Omanu)

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 7/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 8/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 1/10

Description: Popular stretch of variable beach breaks. Known as the ‘Mount Coast’ or ‘Ocean Beach’, or more specifically by the proximity to a range of significant landmarks (Omanu Surf Lifesaving Club) or the names of streets where they terminate at the beach edge (e.g. Tay St, Clyde St). Wave quality is dependent on the form of sand banks which generally afford a good consistency suited to high level of use for a very diverse range of recreational activities. Stormwater runoff has an influence on sand movement and rip currents that form the surfable sand banks along a beach otherwise lacking geographical delineation. An iconic stretch of white sandy beach with high scenic, amenity and access values including: easy access facilitated by pedestrian boardwalks or access strips; accessibility for competitions, high visual amenity for onlookers, toilet and shower facilities (although limited further east), close proximity to a large residential area. Tay Street is particularly valued for its facilities and suitability of the reserve as a competition site. Omanu Beach at Surf Road is also of high value for surf lifesaving activities and competition with a surf life saving club located there. Mount Coast is an important stretch of coast for many people as it contains the ‘local break’ of the population of Mount surfers. Local surf competitions have been organised in the past with teams of surfers from different streets or parts of Mount Coast competing against each other for local notoriety. For these reasons this stretch of coast is highly significant the local community as a source of enjoyment, health and well-being. Also contains the ‘Mount Reef’ project which remains in an unfinished state.

Outstanding components:

- 4 - Size or diversity of break area
- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 6 - Level of use
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 8 - Local community and competition
- 10 - Cultural values

Arataki

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 7/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 8/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 1/10

Description: Above average variable beach breaks, similar in many ways to those identified as the 'Mount Coast' breaks although known to hold more sizeable swells. Stormwater runoff has an influence on sand movement and rip currents that form the surfable sand banks along a beach otherwise lacking geographical delineation. A commonly known focal point is the Girven Road access. This stretch of beach features fewer public amenities, less public access and are subsequently have a lower level of use in general compared to the Mount Coast breaks. The scenic value of the sandy beach, dune environment and the associated visual amenity for both surf break users and onlookers is still high and significant. Some of the amenity of these breaks is coupled with a more 'undeveloped' feel (e.g. less boardwalks, car parking) and the intrinsic value of the coastline in its more natural state.

Outstanding components:

- 4 - Size or diversity of break area
- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 8 - Local community and competition

Papamoa Beach ('the Domain')

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 6/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 6/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 1/10

Description: Average, variable stretch of beach breaks with a wide range of surfable banks on offer given suitable conditions. Tends to be smaller in size due to the obstruction from Motiti Island in the swell corridor for the beach, but this is also advantageous in larger swells. High level of use for a diverse range of users which includes a strong surf lifesaving club; these beach breaks are of high recreational significance to the local community, particularly for young families and as a community with an established surf culture. This is evident in the presence of a local boardriders' club. 'The Domain' is the focal point for this activity. High level of amenity value and access including the popular Beach Park and excellent facilities, parking and shops in close proximity to the residential area.

Outstanding components:

- 4 - Size or diversity of break area
- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 6 - Level of use
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 8 - Local community and competition

Motiti Island (east side)

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 7/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: Unknown/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 9/10

Description: Largely an unknown quantity, Motiti Island has a near-mythical status for offering a range of high performance reef breaks. A largely untouched environment contributes to making this spot a unique surfing experience unto itself. Restricted access due to its distance offshore (22km from Tauranga Harbour entrance).

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery

Kaituna Cut

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 6/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 5/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 6/10

Description: River mouth break situated at the mouth of the Kaituna River. Significant to the local surfing community associated with areas such as Te Puke and Maketu and other breaks frequented by locals in this area.

Outstanding components:

- 8 - Local community and competition

Maketu

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 6/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 4/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 8/10

Description: A combination of a more consistent right-hand river mouth beach break and a less consistent right-hand reef point. Point requires a combination of factors to make it work properly and is therefore perceived as fickle to outsiders, although used by surfers from all over the region. Local amenity values and access are good and surfing brings a notable economic benefit to a local community with strong cultural values (indigenous and surfing). A raw and undeveloped feel to the landscape (particularly the sand spit and cliffs) is associated with the break which adds a unique value to the overall surfing experience.

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 8 - Local community and competition
- 10 - Cultural values

Newdicks Beach

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 7/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 7/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 2/10

Description: Variation of beach breaks with rocky outcrops which help give sand banks good form contributing to above average wave quality. Geographical factors at times create more favourable conditions than other areas. Significant to the local surfing community, although used by surfers from all over the region. The scenic value of this break is high given its largely undeveloped natural state. Immediate services and facilities are not present, although this adds to the overall surfing experience. Public access is restricted as it crosses over private land and requires a small fee.

Outstanding components:

- 4 - Size or diversity of break area
- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 8 - Local community and competition

Little Waihi

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 7/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 6/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 9/10

Description: Good left-hand river mouth breaking onto sand with above average consistency. Access is not easy although generally secure. Situated in a landscape with high scenic value due to a high level of naturalness. Another break with significant value to the local surfing community and also used by surfers from all over the region.

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 8 - Local community and competition

Pukehina Beach

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 7/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 6/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 1/10

Description: Above average variable beach break given more favourable geographical factors influencing wave quality. Expansive stretch of sand dunes form part of a landscape with high naturalness and scenic value. Associated with other breaks in close proximity with significant value to the local surfing community; also used by surfers from all over the region.

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 8 - Local community and competition

Matata Straights

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 8/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 4/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 1/10

Description: Extensive stretch of beach breaks that produce very good quality surfable waves, although often require an acute set of conditions to work. Associated with other breaks in close proximity with significant value to local surfing communities; also hosts a diverse range of recreational users from all over the region. The Matatā's straights are a unique and largely undeveloped stretch of coastline with high naturalness and scenic values, notably formed by the cliffs that provide a back drop to the coast. Limited access over the sand dunes is created by the railway and state highway that runs parallel to the coast with few parking areas.

Outstanding components:

- 4 - Size or diversity of break area
- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 6 - Level of use
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 8 - Local community and competition

Tarawera Cut ('the Black Drain'), Walkers Access ('Walkers', Walkers Rd), Thornton Beach, Airports, Rangitāiki

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 7/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 6/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 4/10

Description: Combination of variable river mouth and beach breaks on exposed, raw and largely undeveloped coastline. Good wave quality. Significant to a well-established local surfing community predominantly based out of the eastern Bay of Plenty area. Access and amenity values are generally low, at times restricted across private land; although generally not disadvantageous to the overall surfing experience in the remote landscape. A range of recreational users frequent these spots requiring mutual respect in the shared use of certain areas, particularly around river mouths.

Outstanding components:

- 4 - Size or diversity of break area
- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 8 - Local community and competition

Coastlands

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 5/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 4/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 1/10

Description: Variable, average beach break set up. Access and amenities are good although limited in a recently-developed residential area. Access is restricted to the southern end of the break although available provided users do not cut through the Opihi Urupa land (an ancient burial ground at Piripai Spit). High scenic values and naturalness of the coastline are significant, particularly in relation to the Whakatane Heads. Significant area for a number of local community aspects.

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 8 - Local community and competition
- 10 - Cultural values

Whakatane Heads

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 10/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 3/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 8/10

Description: Outstanding right hand river mouth point influenced by rock formations within the Whakatane River Mouth, being one of the few surf breaks in the Bay that create surfable waves in large swells. Produces challenging and excellent wave quality although is subject to inconsistent conditions and highly dependent on water and sediment flows from the Whakatane River. Access and use conflicts at times with boats navigating the river bar, although generally attitudes are mutually respectful and surfers have also been known to assist boaties in trouble as they are commonly out there during 'treacherous' conditions. A break within an area of immense value to the local community well beyond use by surf-riders – a busy area as the 'gateway to the town'. A place of highly significant cultural value for both tangata whenua and pakeha. Attracts users from throughout the region and beyond, and can handle a high level of use due to a large take-off zone. A source of immense enjoyment, health and well-being for regular users. Excellent amenity and access values are provided including: public services, facilities, parking and landscaped areas for those enjoying the visual amenity in close proximity to the township. Often a popular spectacle for onlookers situated within a land/seascape of high naturalness and scenic value. Access is restricted from the Coastlands side of the river, although available provided users do not cut through the Opihi Urupa land (an ancient burial ground at Piripai Spit).

Outstanding components:

- 4 - Size or diversity of break area
- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 6 - Level of use
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 8 - Local community and competition
- 9 - Value as a national/internationally recognised break
- 10 - Cultural values

Ohope (Westend)

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 6/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 8/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 2/10

Description: Variable beach break known for producing a good left hand break. Consistent conditions suitable to a high level and diversity of recreational users – an exemplary 'nursery break' at the heart of a strong, family-orientated local surfing community. Highly significant value across environmental, economic, social and cultural aspects – includes notable heritage value for the surfing community. A source of enjoyment, health and well-being for a large number of users. Situated in a picturesque land/seascape with high naturalness and scenic values for all users. Excellent amenity value and access across all facets.

Outstanding components:

- 4 - Size or diversity of break area
- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 6 - Level of use
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 9 - Local community and competition
- 10 - Cultural values

Opotiki

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 4/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 4/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 3/10

Description: Beach break with occasionally good waves dependent on sand bank formation influenced by rips and river mouths. The Waiotahi Beach features many rivers and streams producing banks of reasonable quality. Good for surfers of all levels.

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery

Torere

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 3/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 1/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 8/10

Description: Right-hand reef break requiring an acute set of conditions to work. Generally other breaks of greater quality in the Eastern BOP region will be used in the conditions required to make this break work. Access is difficult in a remote area, although scenic and naturalness values are high, typical of the breaks east of Opotiki.

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery

Hawai

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 8/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 3/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 7/10

Description: Right hand shingle point also influenced by river mouth. Produces high quality waves although lacks consistently suitable conditions. Situated within a remote, largely untouched land/seascape with high scenic and naturalness values – a real wilderness experience for outsiders. Part of a unique collection of breaks significant to the Eastern Bay of Plenty area, local communities, and the surfing community of the entire region as a whole. Attracts a range of recreational users from all across the region and beyond when favourable conditions are present providing a rich, raw, grass-roots style experience unique to this collection of breaks. A popular spot for holiday and recreational use which includes a camping ground and easy access to the break. Within an area of the coast of high importance to local iwi for a number of reasons.

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 7 - Amenity value and access
- 8 - Local community and competition
- 10 - Cultural values

Maraenui

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 8/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 3/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 7/10

Description: Right-hand point breaking on shingle in a rocky line-up. Produces high quality waves although lacks consistently suitable conditions. Situated within a remote, largely untouched land/seascape with high scenic and naturalness values – a real wilderness experience for outsiders. Part of a unique collection of breaks significant to the Eastern Bay of Plenty area, local communities, and the surfing community of the entire region as a whole. Attracts a range of recreational users from all across the region and beyond when favourable conditions are present providing a rich, raw, grass-roots style experience unique to this collection of breaks. Access is difficult, lacking definition of track down to beach.

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 8 - Local community and competition
- 10 - Cultural values

Motu River Mouth

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 10/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 4/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 7/10

Description: Outstanding right-hand river mouth breaking onto shingle and stones. Produces excellent quality waves although lacks consistently suitable conditions. Situated within a remote, largely untouched land/seascape with high scenic and naturalness values – a real wilderness experience for outsiders. Part of a unique collection of breaks significant to the Eastern Bay of Plenty area, local communities, and the surfing community of the entire region as a whole. Attracts a range of recreational users from all across the region and beyond when favourable conditions are present providing a rich, raw, grass-roots style experience. The integrity of this coastal environment is highly significant to the local community, including visiting surfers who have frequented the break for a number of decades. Informal access.

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery
- 6 - Level of use
- 8 - Local community and competition
- 9 - Value as a national/internationally recognised break
- 10 - Cultural values

Hariki Beach, Waihou Bay

- 1 - Wave quality rating: 3/10
- 2 - Consistency rating: 2/10
- 3 - Rarity rating: 5/10

Description: These two areas are examples of variable rocky reef and beach break setups found in the east of the Bay of Plenty Region. Inconsistent and largely unknown quantities for outsiders, they are surf breaks predominantly used by local communities. Part of a remote, largely untouched landscape with high scenic and naturalness values.

Outstanding components:

- 5 - Naturalness/scenery

Appendix 10 – Glossary

Bombie: or, ‘**Bombora**’, an Australian word that refers to a big wave that breaks outside the normal surfing line-up.

Grommet: A young surfer. While it seems that being called a "grommet" would be derogatory, in fact, most surfers wish they still had that grommet perspective of the world. For the most part, grommets are boy and girl surfers younger than 18-20 years old.

Line-up: a noun that refers to the calm, deep area beyond the breaking waves where a surfer waits for the next wave. Surfers often talk and socialize in the line-up while waiting for waves. After watching for where good waves are breaking, surfers use landmarks on the beach to find the best spot to wait.

Nursery break: high recreational value for a variety of reasons, although predominantly where a surf break caters for all levels of ability, fosters surfing (or recreational) communities and provides social, economic and cultural well-being.

Right-hander/left-hander: If the wave peels to the right from the surfer’s perspective (to the left when looking from the beach), the wave is said to be a “righthand” wave, or a “righthander.” If the wave peels to the left from the surfer’s perspective (to the right when looking from the beach), the wave is said to be a “lefthand” wave, or a “lefthander.” (Scarfe et al, 2003).

Appendix 11 – Maps of regionally significant surf breaks – Bay of Plenty





