

Results from the Surveys

Not everyone who visits the Wairarapa Coast has the time to write a submission on the Coastal Strategy. So how would we find out what they love about the coast, why they visit and what issues they have? The answer was to get out to the coast, approach people on the beaches and ask them "What's important to you?"

A survey of 378 people was undertaken over the Wellington Anniversary weekend, extending from Ocean Beach in the south around to Mataikona in the north. The survey asked people where they were from, how often they visited the Wairarapa coast, why they visited, what they did at the coast and if there were any dislikes, suggested improvements or overall issues that they had.

How will this information help the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy?

The survey will contribute to the Coastal Strategy in two ways. It has helped identify site specific issues that can now be acknowledged in the Strategy, and it has also engaged many people in the Strategy process that may otherwise have been overlooked. A strategy with strong community involvement and support is much more likely to be successful.

Where were people from?

30% of people surveyed were from the Wairarapa, with 39% from the Wellington area and 11% from Mantawatu. Of the 378 people surveyed only 13 were permanent residents at the survey site, but almost 30% either owned a property or had a caravan site they returned to regularly.

Why do people visit the Wairarapa Coast?

Overall, people came to the Wairarapa Coast because of the activities available (37%), as a chance to get away from it all (23%), or because family or friends owned a property at the coast (18%). The same reasons also emerged when considering the results for each location, but it was evident that 'nature' and 'scenery' were also important reasons for visiting.

Is there anything people don't like about the Wairarapa Coast?

A total of 15% of people said they did not have any dislikes about the coast and 33% did not answer this question. This indicates that many people enjoy the coast the way it is. The most common dislikes were access to and condition of toilets (11%) and rubbish (8%). Overall 7% disliked the number of vehicles on the beach. Other location specific dislikes were a lack of sealed roads, no drinking water, lack of shelter, erosion and access to the beach.

What improvements did people suggest?

Many suggestions related to 'fixing' the things people disliked (toilets, rubbish, drinking water, shelter). More boat launching was a suggested improvement for Castlepoint and improved camping facilities for Mataikona. At Riversdale Beach people wanted more recreational activities. At three locations people suggested 'leaving it as it is' (Flat Point, Pahaoa and Ocean Beach).

Were there any other issues people were concerned about?

The most commonly raised issue was rubbish (38%), while 37% of people raised no issues at all. The increasing spread of houses (30%), and water quality (22%) were also significant issues overall. Overfishing, too many people, the visual impact on landscape, poaching and beach access were also of concern (10-18%).

Visual impact on the landscape was an issue at Pahaoa and Mataikona. At White Rock people were concerned with erosion and other hazards, and the increasing price of land. Poaching was an issue for people at Lake Ferry.

Consultation Feedback



A Background to the Coastal Strategy

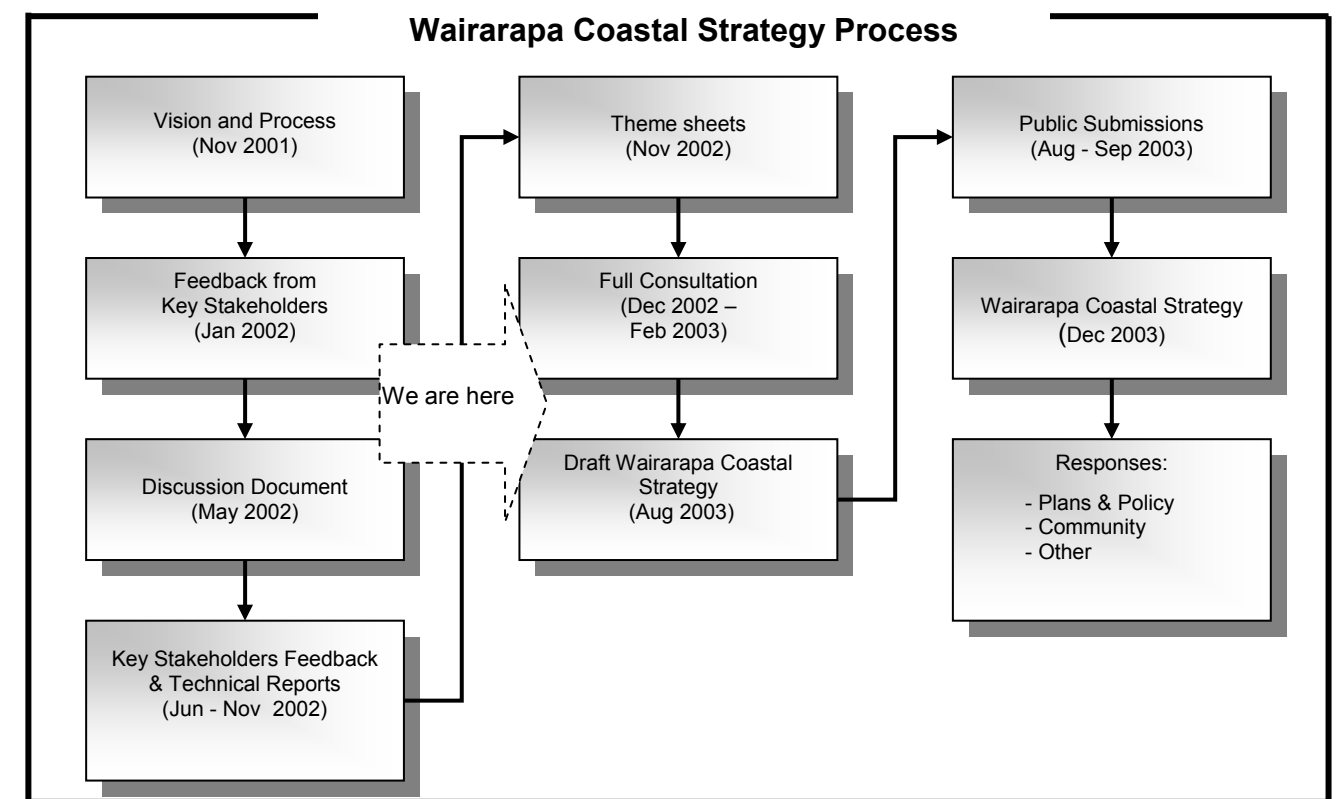
The Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa District Council's, Greater Wellington Regional Council and Rangitaane and Ngati Kahungungu Iwi are working together with the community to develop a Wairarapa Coastal Strategy.

The development of the Strategy is guided by the draft vision:

"To provide for sensitive, sustainable development of the Wairarapa Coast, which recognises and retains its special qualities."

The consultation we have carried out so far, including the recent community wide consultation over the summer, is helping us define what is special about the Wairarapa Coast, and how the community would like to manage its development. All of this consultation is invaluable and will help in preparing a Draft Coastal Strategy

The draft strategy that will be released for comment in August.



Contact us:

If you would like any more information about the Coastal Strategy, or would like to be added to, or taken off, our mailing list please contact Helen Marr or Rachel Hornsby, ph 06 378 2484, PO Box 41 Masterton, or email: wcsq@gw.govt.nz

Results from the Submissions

We wanted to find out how people felt about the Wairarapa Coast, so we asked the question "What's important to you?". We delivered a pamphlet outlining some issues and options for the coast to all coastal homes and made them available at the local stores. In response to this more than 300 people requested more information and submission forms. We sent out a series of 7 'Theme Sheets' which summarised the issues and options for the different aspects of the coast (the 7 themes are shown below). We received more than 150 submissions from a range of people and were overwhelmed with the response. Summarised here are the main issues raised in submissions. If you would like anymore information please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at the contacts listed on the front page.



Landscape

The rugged, isolated and natural beauty of the Wairarapa coast were considered important values that needed to be maintained. People indicated an almost spiritual attachment to the coastline. Threats to these values were noted as being increased development, buildings of inappropriate design or location (on ridge lines, prominent points), increased infrastructure (eg street lights) and increased resident and visitor populations.



Natural Environment and Ecology

Many submitters were concerned about the impact of off-road vehicles and motorbikes damaging dunes and nesting birds on sand and gravel spits.

The link between increased use of the coast, and increased damage to the environment was noted with concern. This included concerns about poaching and over-fishing.

Landowners and residents were noted as being important stewards of our natural environment.



Access & Recreation

Camping was an issue raised by many submitters. Some people felt that camping (especially free camping) should be allowed to continue. Other people felt strongly that camping had negative environmental impacts (toilets, rubbish, fire) and should be restricted to where facilities are provided.

Many submitters were concerned about areas around the coast where access is blocked off. Managed access was favoured, sometimes restricted to foot access, to increase recreation and minimise the environmental impacts caused by vehicles and poaching (due to easy access).

Access across private land was a major issue for those landowners who submitted.



Built Environment and Infrastructure

Rubbish, roading and sewerage emerged as the major issues.

Submitters wanted improved toilet facilities, and some people suggested more frequent rubbish collection at remote locations. The need for existing developments to upgraded sewerage systems came across strongly.

The issues of good publicity and policing of fire bans, well placed and sensitive signage, and parking at busy areas like Castlepoint, were also raised.

The sense of community and family connections were noted by many submitters at locations all around the coast.



Heritage

Heritage was acknowledged as an important part of New Zealand culture.

People noted that heritage could be an important tourism feature of the Wairarapa coast, and that it would not make economic sense to allow it to be lost.

There was some support for more recognition of European heritage, particularly historic bach settlements.



Coastal Hazards

Many submitters felt that new development should be placed away from hazard prone areas, for example well inland or above a certain land contour height.

Some submitters considered hazards should be controlled to a certain extent, including works required to maintain access, or to protect existing property. Fire risk was a major concern for coastal landowners.



Land Use & Development

The majority of submitters advocated for no more, or very sensitive, development on the coast, and the retention of open space between settlements.

Some submitters were also concerned about the changing character of existing settlements, the loss of the accessible bach type settlement in favour of more expensive dwellings.

Coastal Boundary

We asked people to comment on where they thought the inland boundary for the Coastal Strategy should be, at the moment the inland boundary for Coastal policies is different in each of the three District Councils.

A large majority of people preferred the coastal boundary to be at the dominant ridgeline, or some other landscape definition of the coast. An ecological definition was also popular. A mix between the landscape definition and some other method where the landscape is flatter or less easily defined was also favoured.

It appears that there was some confusion about the issue of a coastal boundary with the issue of access. The coastal boundary is a limit for policies about the coast such as guidelines for development, but is not a distance to provide for a public access strip.

General Comments

Poaching, over fishing, marine reserves and off-shore marine farming were also raised by submitters. These issues will be conveyed to the appropriate organisations and considered for things that are within the Councils' control, such as reserve access. Off-shore marine farming in the Region is currently being addressed by Greater Wellington Regional Council following on from the aquaculture law reforms.