

## New Plan to protect region's coast

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Bay of Plenty Regional Council is developing a new Regional Coastal Environment Plan which sets rules, policies and objectives to protect the region's coastal marine area.

The Regional Council has been reviewing its existing Coastal Environment Plan, which also includes policies for land along the coast, including sand dunes and coastal wetlands.

The review looked at how well the current Plan was working and what changes were needed to address coastal issues.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council Group Manager Strategic Development Fiona McTavish said hui had been held with iwi and hapū across the region and the Council had consulted with other councils, community groups and stakeholders in developing the Plan.

"The parts that are working well include protecting high-value ecological sites in the coastal marine area [from mean high water springs out to sea], and identifying areas sensitive to coastal hazards," she said.

All the region's territorial authorities had either completed or made significant progress toward including district specific coastal hazard policies and rules in their plans. There was also room for improvement in several areas, she said.

"We've concerns about water quality in some of our estuaries and harbours. The community is still worried about the effects of vehicle and horse access to sensitive areas, along with the incremental loss and degradation of dune lands, wetlands and coastal forest. Some of the work being done to repair this damage is not ecologically appropriate," she said.

"Our consultation also identified some community concerns that are not addressed adequately in the current Plan, including managing mangroves and aquaculture activities."

Mrs McTavish said iwi and hapū felt they were not able to exercise kaitiakitanga or guardianship of coastal areas, or effectively participate in decision-making.

"Iwi felt that cultural values were given insufficient weight, and that matauranga Māori or knowledge about the coast was not recognised by decision-makers," she said.

"We'll be talking to tangata whenua, stakeholders and the community to develop a draft version of the new Plan by the end of this year."

Information on the coastal plan review is on the Regional Council's website [here](#).

### Background

Changes to legislation and national policy need to be reflected in the new Regional Coastal Environment Plan, particularly the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010.

The new Plan will also give effect to the new proposed Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement once it is operative. To give effect to national policy direction and address current issues facing the coastal environment, the Plan needs new objectives, policies and methods.

These will consider integrated catchment management for sedimentation, mangrove management and water quality, aquaculture, infrastructure, renewable energy generation (including geothermal) and appropriate restoration, remediation and mitigation for natural character and biodiversity.

The Regional Council will ask for feedback on the draft Plan before publicly notifying a new proposed Bay of Plenty Regional Coastal Environment Plan in 2013.

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