

Glen Isla - Further Evidence from Waihi Beach Environment Society

In Glen Isla Place there has been spasmodic focus on dune care from the immediate area in the past.

There has been more of a focus by our group of volunteers for weekly working bees at the north end although we have planted there in the past through Coast Care.

Policy CH6 (and NZCPS Policy 26)

Regional, city and district councils should through their regional, city and district plans and when making decisions on resource consent applications, protect, restore and enhance natural values and features that provide a natural defence from coastal hazards.

WBOPDC has complied with the first section of this policy in having it in their plan but contrary to the financial and moral interests of all ratepayers, has undertaken to take over responsibility for the maintenance of the wall. (if consented)

This despite Council stating “the proposal is not entirely consistent with its Reserves Management Plan.

Sand from the stream entrance

Relative to sand dredgings for the Port of Tauranga which are barged offshore to supplement Mt Maunganui Beach, particularly the Mount main beach (and now inner city beaches, bays such as Fergusson Park)

Glen Isla can likely benefit on a pro rata basis. More strategically placed sand along the frontal dunes of Glen Isla complemented with seasonal plantings over winter would enhance the area potentially even equal to the self-evident dune expansion in the Surf Club area.

Coastal Restoration Trust Handbook

Storm Cut Erosion

“In summary with storm cut erosion and recovery the shoreline is simply fluctuating backwards and forwards over time.”

Commentary

The sequence of a typical storm here involves firstly strong winds blowing sand inland to the rear and centre of the dune then wave cut to the front dune toe. The volume of the dune is therefore typically increased to the rear and centre of the dune.

Sea Level Rise (quoted from Handbook)

“where we are able to keep existing dunes intact or modify our use of the coastal environment to regain sand dune buffers lost by previous development there is little doubt that we will be better protected from future climate change impact than otherwise.”

In Reference to Reserves

A comparison with Tauranga City Council’s LAND POLICY 2022 to WBOPDC approach to the latter granting consent in principle to the location of the revetment wall on Council (ie land) was illuminating.

The Tauranga Council Land Policy purpose is to establish a consistent approach and clear expectations.

Principles

Out comes sought from the use of Council land

3.1 Community benefit

Council land is principally for community use, however Council land may be used for private commercial purposes where this provides a public benefit and is consistent with relevant plans, strategies and policies.

3.2 Environment Council recognises and protects the environmental values associated with Council land. Areas with high ecological values are recognised, valued and protected.

3.5 Provide health and wellbeing

Encroachment into Coastal Reserves

12.2 The Council's key objective of maintaining the natural dune environment in perpetuity of the coastal reserve is paramount including the number of access points to the beach.

12.5 Highest priority for removal of encroachments.

A previous Coast Care contractor said Tauranga City Council even said to a community group that their community garden had to be removed. Their policy is absolute.

Assessment of Environmental Effects

The applicant records 'The AEE notes that although the dune profile at The Loop has been modified by rock armour beach levels are similar to further south where there is no protection. This is an important point in that it is contrary to the often repeated narrative that rock wall protection works destroys beaches. Similarly, further along Shaw Rd although beach levels do fluctuate from time to time there is no indication that the existing rock revetment has caused any net permanent loss of beach'

Any walkers along Shaw Road two hours and more either side of high tide will experience "coastal squeeze" where they cannot get past 67 Shaw Road as the tide normally reaches the rock wall. It's usual to observe people invariably turning around nearer Brewer Park when going down to the beach twice daily. The liner of the revetment which should be buried is often visible at ground level.

Our experience is that rock walls absolutely destroy our section of the beach.

The stated positive effect -

"protect 3 Mile Creek and adjoining existing development from coastal erosion"

However, as previously stated Council has no duty to protect reserve land or to protect private property. (P 7 in the head submission.)

“Any adverse effects of the proposed structure on adjoining areas due to rip currents are expected to be negligible”

It should be noted that the backwash from the wall fronting 43 Shaw Road (walking access 15) when the tide is reaching the rocks creates a potential danger making it hard to stay on one's feet particularly for children and the elderly and skinny people. This is a place where families swim.

It is anticipated that the proposed wall at Glen Isla could create similar aberrant effects.

We are mindful of Waihi Beach's reputation as a safe beach and desire to see that reputation retained.

“The proposed location of the structure is acceptable to the functionality and operation of the reserve.”

This 200 m long rock revetments clearly will impact the dune as there are no recorded instances there of spinifex successfully expanding over rocks to advance further in order to create a dune.

Coast Care signage encapsulates the vital importance of dunes in maintaining a healthy beach.

No plants no dunes
Plants protect dunes
No dunes no beach

Many artists exhibiting in the Waihi Beach Gallery and elsewhere feature dunes in their seascapes. The local chemist has a large poster. Notably no artists work features rock walls.

We note the comment in an applicant report

“Quite apart from the visual impact of revetment undesirable effects may include toe scour and overtopping both of which can be remedied by the judicious addition of rocks.”

This is an alarming admission that the revetment may encroach even further on to the beach. Encroachment presumably without public notification under the guise of emergency repairs. Who pays?

Witnessing rock placement beyond the position stated with the Shaw Road, Loop revetment does not lead to one having any confidence in the process. Whangamata have established and re-established post cyclone an extensive dune system with sand pushups and extensive plantings reinstating some 700 m of eroded dune.

From beach access 12 there is approximately 27 m of dune from the nearest boundary.

This compares to 28 m plus measured from the property fence of Glen Isla Place to the spinifex edge.

Mitigation

We note the applicant has a detailed planting plan as mitigation.

It should be noted that this is no more (and far far less) than volunteers have been doing for many years through formal working bees.

On 15 June, 20 and 27 July volunteers planted 3 sites. Where our working bees have been beside popular walkways we have noted a paradigm shift in thinking as more of the public come to appreciate the vital value of our care for our dunes.

International

New Zealand is far from alone in coming to terms with coastal erosion and climate change. Although every beach is unique in shape, sand size, causation of erosion as at Omaha - (partially caused by sand mining) creation of damaging breakwaters (New Plymouth) etc. common features are apparent.

You Tube videos such as “Decisions to harden Hawaii beaches can be dangerous (B Ideas) illustrate what we have known for a long time.

Costs

The Council proposal the proposal is not consistent with the Reserves Policy ie the ratepayers taking over the cost of and responsibility for the wall in spite of the majority of the ratepayers opposition to paying for this maintenance.