

Values of the Ngunguru Sandspit

Contributed by NSaPS
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Ecology - a habitat type that is now very rare both in Northland and nationally, supporting 22 threatened and near-threatened native species. It is a very important site for breeding and migratory shore birds.

Geology - an excellent example of a sandspit barrier that enclosed a bay and river to create an estuary during the Holocene; the natural character of the sandspit invites study of the process and morphodynamics. It is a significant example of a threatened coastal feature.

Geomorphology - the sandspit is a natural barrier that protects the estuary and its shoreline community from the sea (storm waves, wind waves, storm surge) and provides a safe harbour for recreational boating. In the past, the sandspit has been breached by the river in flood and over-washed by ocean waves. Flooding hazard and Marine Hazard 1 areas are outlined on Northland Regional Council and Whangarei District Council maps.

Archaeology a very rare archaeological landscape that must be recognized in its entirety. It incorporates evidence of early settlement and long distance trade. It has more than 50 recorded archaeological sites. It is a place of great significance to Maori, to historians and to archaeologists. Many sites were preserved by blown sand and are now becoming exposed due to erosion of the older dunes and shoreline changes on the estuary side of the sandspit.

Waahi tapu - the whole area is sacred to local iwi and holds great cultural significance. The entire sandspit and adjoining slopes are registered with the Historic Places Trust as waahi tapu. It was a scene of the last major intertribal battle. There is very little recognition in NZ of battle sites although they have become encapsulated in legend & people value legends (Sir Neil Cossons, Chairman of English Heritage).

Visual amenity the whole area is Outstanding but according to the Whangarei District Council Plan it is only partially classified as such.

Purposes of the Society

- To promote the protection of the historic, cultural and natural state of the Ngunguru Sandspit and its associated coastal area.
- To take all reasonable steps to preserve and protect indigenous flora and fauna and the natural features of New Zealand and in particular the area surrounding Ngunguru for the present and future generations.
- To spread knowledge and encourage appreciation of native flora and fauna.
- To educate the public of all age groups regarding the importance of protecting natural resources.
- To meet the vital need to conserve the environment.