What are some of the options ?

The Options

Protection of important sites

The most important ecological sites that are not currently formally protected could be protected by approaches such as:

- Voluntary agreements, such as QEII covenants
- Informal or formal agreements with landowners to protect areas of land
- Appropriate public organisation purchasing significant sites, or swapping land from less important areas to achieve protection.

Planning controls could also be used around the most important sites to protect them from inappropriate:

- Vegetation clearance
- Earthworks
- Drainage
- Subdivision

Even areas that are already formally protected may still be at risk from changes in land use nearby, inappropriate access, or pests. Some of the options for avoiding these types of effects include:

- Fencing off reserves to prevent stock and vehicle access
- Restricting vehicle access from certain areas eg dunes, by way of voluntary guidelines, signage or by-laws.
- Formal or voluntary guidelines to avoid inappropriate land uses in the sensitive 'buffer zone' around important sites eg no invasive weed species or effluent disposal systems

These methods can be best used in conjunction with **community stewardship, financial incentives** and **education**

Community Stewardship

Often the people closest to the land, or with an interest in the land are in the best position to protect the land. This can be achieved by:

- Coastal care groups; voluntary groups of residents who act as guardians for areas, planting, protecting and monitoring
- Stewardship Groups comprising landowners, iwi and owners of reserve land (such as Councils and DoC) working together to increase understanding and integration of work.
- Community wardens to enforce bylaws such as restricted access

Financial Incentives

Financial incentives could be used to assist and encourage landowners to protect important areas, to develop and improve areas or to secure ownership:

- Rate relief
- Reduction in consent fees
- Land swap or purchase
- Financial assistance for fencing or planting
- Materials, pest control and advice

Education and Information

These types of methods can be used effectively in conjunction with some of the other methods. They can provide people with a better understanding and appreciation of the environment and how to manage it.

- Guidelines for ecologically sensitive land use
- Education: onsite information (signs), education programmes
- Publicity of key issues

Natural Environment and Ecology

Theme sheet

The Wairarapa Coast is noted for its rugged beauty and isolation and is largely undeveloped; but it may not stay this way forever. You may have noticed that coastal sections are becoming sought after and property values are soaring. This development may have some positive spin-offs for the Wairarapa but could equally have negative implications for the character of our coast and how we enjoy it if not managed well.

The development of a Wairarapa Coastal Strategy will enable our community to come up with a management approach to retain the special qualities of the coast we value.

This theme sheet contains information on some of the issues facing our coast, and outlines some of the options for dealing with those issues. The issues and options are a mixture of technical information and views of the community. We want to know what you think the important issues are, and how you think they should be managed.

Your comments will be used to help develop a draft strategy that will be released for further comment mid-year.

This theme sheet
contains a summary of some of the information contained in the
'Natural Environment and Ecology'
technical report.

If you are interested in finding out more information about the Wairarapa Coastal environment, this report can be read at all Wairarapa councils, Iwi offices and libraries.

The Wairarapa Coastal Environment

The pre-settlement coastal environment looked very different than it does today. The original vegetation cover varied from foreshore herbfield and grassland, through to grass and shrubland and coastal forest containing akiraho, ngaio, taupata, kanuka and mahoe.

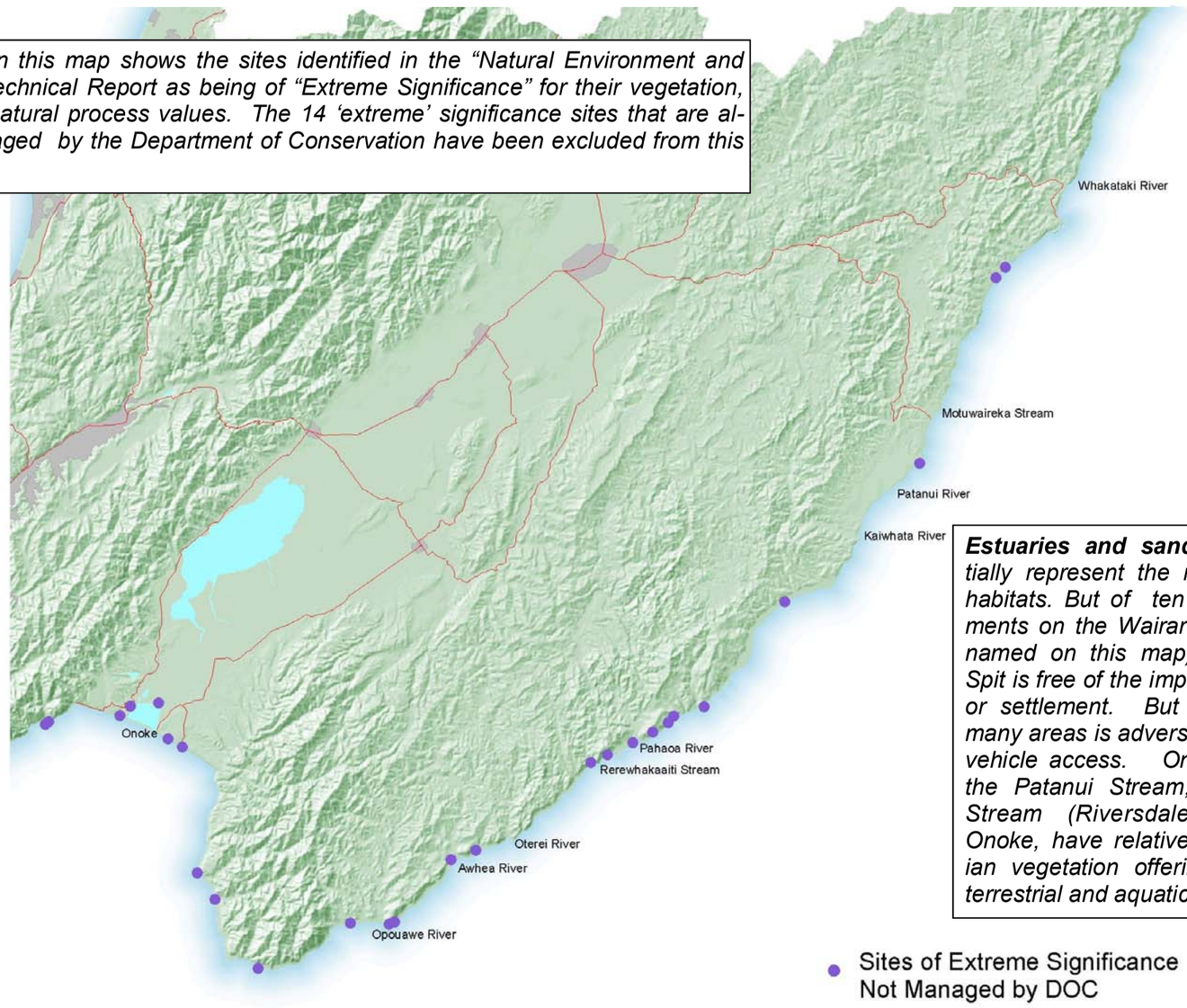
This diverse environment supported a wide range of plants and animals from the sea up to the hills behind. Typically there would be wetlands behind dunes in many places.

Today the full range of habitat is only present within the boundaries of Rimutaka and Aorangi Forest Parks.

Due to the influence of human occupation there has been a significant loss of native vegetation, animals and ecosystems. Some of what remains is on land managed by the Department of Conservation, but much is on privately owned land.

What is the Wairarapa coastal natural environment ?

The dots on this map shows the sites identified in the "Natural Environment and Ecology" Technical Report as being of "Extreme Significance" for their vegetation, habitat or natural process values. The 14 'extreme' significance sites that are already managed by the Department of Conservation have been excluded from this map.

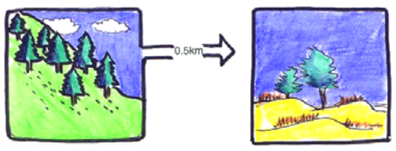


Estuaries and sand bars *potentially represent the richest coastal habitats. But of ten such environments on the Wairarapa Coast (as named on this map), only Onoke Spit is free of the impacts of grazing or settlement. But it, along with many areas is adversely affected by vehicle access. Only three sites, the Patanui Stream, Motuwaireka Stream (Riversdale) and Lake Onoke, have relatively intact riparian vegetation offering habitat for terrestrial and aquatic life.*

What is affecting the natural environment ?

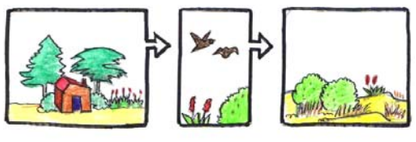
The Issues

Weed invasion causing plant suppression.



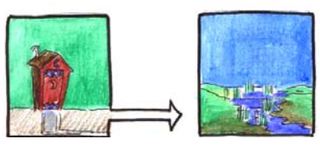
Invasion of grassland-shrubland or open scrub by pine or macrocarpa is most likely when source trees are within 0.5 km upwind of the site.

Invasion of grassland-shrubland or open scrub



by bird carried seed of woody shrubs such as boxthorn and boneseed seems to be most prevalent at sites close to settlements where macrocarpa or other tall exotic trees create roosts for starlings.

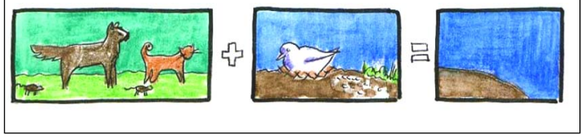
Artificial increases in fertility from stock effluent and topdressing or increase in fertility inputs from septic tanks following subdivision. This can mean that indigenous species adapted for infertile sites (dune wetlands, dunes) are replaced by other species.



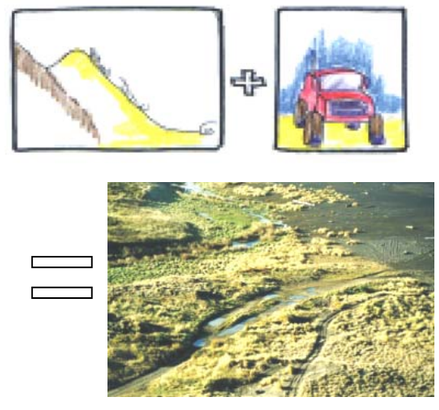
In the hillier parts of the Wairarapa the coastline offers only a narrow ribbon of flat land suitable for roading and housing, and this flat land is also a valuable farm asset. The loss of wildlife habitat in these areas has been significant and human disturbances resulting from road access along these ribbons and to the bars at river mouths remain an ongoing threat to seabirds, marine mammals, vertebrates and invertebrates.

Many significant natural areas are not formally protected and are therefore susceptible to a number of threats. Habitat deterioration is the main threat and often goes unnoticed until periodic surveys reveal reduction in distribution of wildlife or of individual plant species; then it is often too late to save the habitat. Some of the causes of habitat loss and deterioration on the Wairarapa coast are outlined here.

Predation and browsing by pests, pets or farm animals



Physical damage to sensitive habitats in particular from vehicles on shingle-fields and dunes



Accidental fire will also cause habitat reduction long-term if there is little indigenous seed source for recolonisation of the site, or burnt off land is taken over by pasture.

It has been shown that ongoing use of driftwood for firewood is playing a part in reducing katipo habitat (although the problem is complicated by a competing Australian spider).