

Protecting a surf break

What does it mean?

The Taranaki Regional Council is reviewing the Coastal Plan for Taranaki, which is the rule book for activities in the 'wet part' of the coast.

We've been running a 'wave survey' www.wavesurvey.co.nz as part of the review. It's a way for the community to tell us which surf breaks are valued, and why. This information will help us to determine the appropriate level of protection for each break.

Under the revised Coastal Plan, all surf breaks will be protected through the resource consent process. But the level of protection will vary.

The list of surf breaks included in the 'wave survey' is primarily made up of the 80 surf breaks that are currently mapped within the Regional Policy Statement for Taranaki, 2010. Information on the remainder of the surf breaks was obtained from Wavetrack New Zealand Surfing Guideⁱ, which maps many of the Taranaki surf breaks, and conversations with local surfers.

Four surf breaks – Waiwhakaiho, Stent Road, Backdoor Stent and Farmhouse Stent – are protected through the national-level

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement. Any new activities or developments at these '**nationally significant**' breaks will not be allowed to have any adverse effects.

Surf breaks classed as '**regionally significant**' in the revised Coastal Plan will also be protected to a high level – but to a slightly lesser degree. Almost all activities or developments will not be able to have any adverse effect. And where an activity or development is significant enough to be allowed to proceed, any adverse effects must be remedied or mitigated.

If a surf break is classed as '**locally significant**' in the revised Coastal Plan, the merits of any new activity or development will need to be weighed up against the merits of leaving the break undisturbed. Where a new activity or development is allowed, any adverse effects will need to be remedied or mitigated.

A list of surf breaks, along with their classification, will be included in the proposed Coastal Plan for Taranaki which will be released for public consultation late 2017.

*'all surfbreaks will be protected ...
but the level of protection will vary.'*

What are we protecting surf breaks from?

The following types of activities or developments have the potential to affect surf breaks.

Seawall, pipeline, groyne, breakwater, jetty

Numerous types of effects can arise from a coastal structure.

Dredging and mining

Changes to the seabed shape in the swell wave corridor of the surf break can affect the wave crest linearity as well as the wave height and direction.

Disruption of access

Access to the surf is important – to ensure all can use and enjoy the breaks. Factors to consider include entry/exit locations for pedestrians and vehicular access to the coast.

Wind farm

Modification of wind speed and direction may affect surf breaks. A reduction in wind speed could be a beneficial effect in many cases. However, sports such as kitesurfing and windsurfing would generally view shelter or distortion as a negative effect.

Offshore structures

Floating or fixed production facilities and wave energy converters have the potential to modify wave conditions.

Wastewater discharge

Wastewater discharges in the vicinity of a surf break may affect water quality and make it unsafe or inappropriate to surf.

What makes surf breaks important?

Council has commissioned an independent expert consultant who has identified *10 important attributes* that can *contribute to a surf break being important*. These are:

Rarity

How rare a surf break type is in the Taranaki region.

Wave quality

How good the wave quality is. Quality is the shape, power, height, length of ride etc.

Wave consistency

How often the waves are good at the surf break, eg, how many days in a year.

Uniqueness

Whether the waves are good at the surf break when they aren't at other surf breaks in Taranaki.

Wilderness

How remote, exposed and 'wild' the experience of the surf break is.

Naturalness

How much the surf break has been changed by humans.

Whether there is:

- native wildlife
- native vegetation ie, not pasture
- good water quality
- no building or other man made structures, bridges or roads.

Amenity

The extent to which the surf break provides features that make the place attractive to visit:

- facilities – eg, café, toilets, picnic areas, club rooms
- services – eg, Surf Life Savers, surfing lessons
- easy access, short travel distance from home
- good place to view or photograph surf.

Level of use

Whether the surf break is popular, do lots of people use the surf break?

Economic value

Whether the surf break is a renowned break or visitor attraction, are competitions held bringing people to the region?

Historical and cultural association

How important the surf break is for cultural and historic reasons, including the importance to tangata whenua, historic club associations such as surf life saving or board riding etc.

You will see questions in the 'wave survey' which relate to these attributes.

Feedback and more information

Go to www.trc.govt.nz/coastal-plan-review/ to find:

- The Draft Coastal Plan in full.
- This summary and background document.
- Other information sheets and background papers.
- An online form for sending feedback to the Council.

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK



www.trc.govt.nz/coastal-plan-review/



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0800 736 222 - we can give you more information, take your feedback or arrange a meeting.

