
REPORT 5
(1215/52/IM)

DRAFT POINT DORSET RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. Purpose of Report

To brief the Committee on the preparation of the draft Point Dorset Reserve Management Plan (see Appendix 1) and seek approval to release the draft management plan for public comment.

2. Executive Summary

The Draft Point Dorset Reserve Management Plan (the plan) has been developed for this coastal reserve between Seatoun and Breaker Bay to meet the requirements of the Reserves Act 1977. This land is owned by the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust with the Council appointed to control and manage the reserve under the Reserves Act.

The purpose of the plan is to provide the Council and Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust (the Trust) with a clear framework for making decisions and managing this reserve for the next 10 years. The plan has been developed from public feedback received on the management plan discussion document released in October 2010 and discussions with staff and community groups.

The key issues covered in the plan are:

- Co management principles
- Protecting and acknowledging heritage and stabilising assets
- Retaining views and minimising modifications to the landscape
- Enhancing ecological features through pest and weed control and restoration
- Minimising the impact of humans on the environment
- Improving access and the visitor experience
- Working with neighbouring landowners to protect values

3. Recommendations

Officers recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*

2. *Recommend to Council that the draft Point Dorset Reserve Management Plan is approved for public comment in accordance with the requirements of section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977.*
3. *Delegate to the Chief Executive Officer and portfolio leader the authority to approve minor wording, formatting and content changes as agreed by the Committee.*
4. *Submitters will have the opportunity to be heard by the Committee in September 2011.*
5. *Note that a final plan will be presented in October 2011 to the Committee for consideration and approval after due consideration of submissions and subsequent amendments*

4. Background

4.1 Site background

For many centuries the site has been used by Māori and European to protect the entrance to Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington's harbour). It is the site of Oruaiti Pā. The land was used by the Defence Force between 1905 until 1991, as Fort Dorset, for coastal defence purposes and military training.

The Department of Conservation took over the management of the coastal escarpment in 2000 to protect public access and the historic and ecological features.

In 2009, ownership transferred from the Crown to the Trust via the Port Nicholson Block (Taranaki Whanui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika) Claims Settlement Act 2009. Wellington City Council was appointed to control and manage the land as Recreation Reserve under section 26 of the Reserves Act 1977.

The following land is covered by the plan (also see Appendix One for map):

Reserve name:	Point Dorset Recreation Reserve
Legal description:	Section 1 SO 38155
Certificate of title:	498577
Area:	8.337ha
Reserve classification:	Recreation Reserve
Gazette notice:	No gazette notice. Covered by Port Nicholson Block (Taranaki Whanui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika) Claims Settlement Act 2009
	Conservation site 2C: Fort Dorset; Open Space B
	Oruaiti Pā is protected as site M114; Fort Dorset is heritage

area 17

The land is part of the Rangitatau Reserve Precinct.

District Plan zoning:
District Plan heritage listing:

4.2 Co-management of reserve

Wellington City Council and the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust have developed a series of protocols around co-management of the reserve:

- Wellington City Council recognises Taranaki Whānui Mana Whenua status and that Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust has ownership of the reserve.
- Taranaki Whānui and Wellington City Council agree that to the extent that they are able under the Reserves Act 1977 and the Port Nicholson Block (Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika) Claims Settlement Act 2009, and any other relevant legislation they will have particular regard to the Mana Whenua view.
- Taranaki Whānui will recognise the role of Wellington City Council on matters relating to the control and management of the reserve.
- Taranaki Whānui and Wellington City Council will meet annually to review the performance of the management year and proposed work programme for the upcoming year.
- An annual report will be available to Wellington City Council and Taranaki Whānui

4.3 Reserve Act requirements

Section 41 of the Reserves Act requires Council to publically notify its intention to develop a reserve management plan. A discussion document was produced and 83 responses were received from the public between October and February. These responses were used to develop this draft plan. A summary of this community feedback is provided at the end of Appendix One.

4.4 Structure of the Draft Management Plan

The plan looks at the core values of Point Dorset. These are culture and history, landscape, ecology, and recreation and access. For each there is discussion about the issues, followed by objectives and policies. The management plan also has administration policies (section 6) and implementation plans (section 7).

4.5 Summary of current planning process

✓	12 October 2010	Public notification of Council's intention to prepare reserve management plan as per section 41 of Reserves Act.
✓	12 October 2010 – 2 February 2011	Discussion document released for a two month consultation period. 83 responses were received.
✓	February – April 2011	Development of draft plan
	12 May 2011	Presentation of draft reserve management plan to SPC seeking approval for release to public
	14 June – 15 August 2011	Release of draft plan for comment
	8 September 2011	Committee hearings on draft plan oral submissions
	October 2011	Completion and approval of final plan by Council

5. Discussion

5.1 Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of the Point Dorset Reserve Management Plan (the Plan) is to provide Wellington City Council (the Council) and Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust (the Trust) with a clear framework for day-to-day management and decision-making for this reserve for the next 10 years. Objectives and policies give guidance for the protection, management, development, operation and public use of Point Dorset Reserve.

This management plan identifies:

- the long-term vision for the reserve
- the natural and cultural values of the reserve and how these will be protected
- recreational activities on the reserve
- general reserve management policies
- actions required to implement this plan

5.2 Vision statement and objectives

The vision statement and objectives were developed from responses from the public and meetings with stakeholders.

Our vision is to protect, interpret, enhance, and where appropriate restore the cultural, historic, landscape, ecological, and recreation features at Oruaiti, Point Dorset Recreation Reserve.

The objectives are:

Recognise, protect and interpret the historical and cultural features of Point Dorset Recreation Reserve.

Protect the natural coastal character of Point Dorset Reserve.

Protect coastal ecosystems so that:

- biodiversity is protected and enhanced
- pest plants and animals are controlled effectively
- changes and influences affecting the health of ecosystems are monitored and acted upon appropriately.

Restore and enhance coastal ecosystems so that:

- restoration improves ecological connectivity and enhances existing ecosystems
- communities are motivated, inspired and educated to get involved in conserving biodiversity.

To provide outdoor recreational opportunities and experiences that are environmentally and socially sustainable and accessible to communities.

To provide a track network that does not damage the coastal environment and historic features.

To manage Point Dorset Reserve in a way that reflects its reserve classification, site values and the vision and objectives of this reserve management plan, while providing for appropriate recreational activities.

5.3 Key issues and policies

The following key issues were raised in the responses from the public and stakeholders. Key policies are also included.

5.3.1 Culture and heritage

Some of the historic features of Point Dorset have been destroyed. Oruaiti Pā has been destroyed by the subsequent military installations over the past century. Some of the buildings and structures associated with Fort Dorset are damaged and becoming a danger to public safety.

There is no on-site information to help visitors find out about Oruaiti Pā and the remaining defence buildings.

Key policies to protect, acknowledge and stabilise heritage include:

- Where appropriate, historical features will be stabilised and made safe for the public. Expert advice will be obtained by the Council from engineers and defence experts and used to identify which structures to keep, repair, fence-off or dismantle.
- Develop a route to show the key features including the pā site and its link to other places on Motu Kairangi, the defence installations, the coastal ecology, the views and surrounding landmarks. This may include installing signs or developing a brochure to support this route.

5.3.2 Landscape

Point Dorset is a prominent landscape feature at the harbour entrance and provides an unmodified natural backdrop to Seatoun.

Many people visit the point to enjoy the views, and wish to see them retained. Some users are concerned about structures being installed at the lookout area, as this may interrupt the area's natural character. The adjacent private land has a telecommunications tower, which interrupts the ridgeline.

Key policies to retain views and minimise modifications to the landscape:

- Much of the grassed area around the lookout will be retained for the views and to recognise the historic importance of this site for defending the harbour entrance.
- Signs or structures should aid people's enjoyment and understanding of Point Dorset and be visually unobtrusive.
- No utilities, masts or telecommunication structures will be situated on the ridgeline

5.3.3 Ecology

Coastal ecosystems at the entrance to Te Whanganui-a-Tara are exposed to environmental extremes. Restoration to enhance the ecological value provides significant challenges. These challenges include erosion of the cliffs on the eastern side, the fragmentation of habitats, the spread of pests and weeds, flax affected by yellow leaf disease, and human impacts on environment (including trampling of vegetation and dog access).

Key policies to enhance the ecological values at Point Dorset include:

- All restoration work shall be carried out with eco-sourced plants.

- The Council will support community restoration initiatives with advice and, where possible, plants and other materials.
- Work with Places for Penguins on ways to improve habitat for penguins.
- Close informal or short-cut tracks that go through areas with important ecology, such as the dune.

5.3.4 Recreation and access

Many people may be unaware of Point Dorset. The entrances are not sign-posted.

The current tracks are difficult to negotiate in places because of the steepness of the hills, eroding sections, overgrown vegetation and poor drainage. There are a few walking and no mountain-biking opportunities in Seatoun. Point Dorset has been identified as a potential part of the Great Harbour Way Te Ara o Pōneke. Some submitters had concerns about the suitability of this site for mountain bikes. An assessment into the suitability of tracks for shared use has been carried out by officers (as required by the *Open Space Access Plan*). The assessment found the access up the hill behind Seatoun School and Breaker Bay Road (Pass of Branda) are not practical for up hill bike use and would be unsafe for down hill use. Bike use in this area would also lead to user group conflict. Based on this finding Point Dorset Reserve will be closed to biking apart from the flat coastal track between Hector Street (near Churchill Park) and the boardwalk off Ludlam Street.

There are steep coastal cliffs, including some that are eroding along parts of the tracks and the lookout area. Some users are concerned about man-made structures as this will interrupt the natural character of the area.

There are some concerns about off-lead dogs creating problems for other users and wildlife, such as penguins. Many people walk their dogs here because it is accessible and provides some challenge and good exercise. The reserve is currently managed as an area where dogs can go on a lead, as described in the *Dog Policy* and *Animal Bylaw*. It should be noted that dogs are prohibited under the *Dog Policy* from the coastal side of the road at Tarakena Bay because penguins nest in the area.

Key policies to manage recreation and access are:

- Close informal or short-cut tracks that go through areas of high ecological value.
- The following activities are permitted at this reserve:
 - Walking and running
 - Exercising dogs on-lead (see Council's *Dog Policy*) *
 - Exercising dogs on-lead (see Council's *Dog Policy*) *
 - Waka landing
 - Mountain biking - only on the track between Hector Street and

- Studying plants and bird-watching
- Sightseeing
- The reserve is closed to the following activities:
 - Motorised vehicles – except for management and emergency services
 - Camping
 - Hunting
 - Open fires
 - Exercising dogs off-leash *
 - Mountain biking – except the track between Hector Street and the boardwalk off Ludlam Street
 - Collection and removal of natural and built material – without approval from Council

NOTE :

- * The Council’s Dog Policy and Animal Bylaws control dog access to Point Dorset. If a change to dog access is proposed at the next review of the Council's Dog Policy and Animal Bylaws (next review is planned 2012/13), this will override the policy on dog access listed above.
- ◆ The Council’s *Open Space Access Plan* Schedule A will require updating to reflect that the area is closed to mountain bikes.
- Seek to limit new structures on the coast, to only those that are necessary.
- Ensure that the design of facilities and access ways promotes safe use of the coast while at the same time maintaining or enhancing the coastal environment and scenic experience.

5.3.5 General policies

Policies which deal with a range of issues are included in section 6 of the draft management plan. Key policies relate to:

- Plan amendment and review
- Relationship with other management plans and Wellington City Council policies
- Reserve acquisitions
- Community involvement in reserve management
- Reserve closure and exclusive use
- Encroachments
- Utilities/infrastructure
- Motorised vehicle access
- Licences
- Commercial leases
- Commemorative and outdoor structures
- Signs

5.4 Implementation

In February 2010, Council agreed that up to \$400,000 from the Plimmer Bequest could be spent on the Point Dorset/Breaker Bay Restoration project.

A draft landscape opportunities plan has been developed after consideration of the public responses to the discussion document (see section 7 of Appendix One). This includes improving the:

- entrances to the reserve,
- accessibility, (including possible track upgrades),
- information on heritage features,
- restoring ecosystems, and
- retaining viewpoints.

5.5 Proposed communication and consultation on draft plan

The Reserves Act (1977) requires the Draft Management Plan to be publicly notified and available for comment for no less than a period of two months and states that submitters must have the opportunity to be heard in front of Committee prior to recommending the plan to the Minister of Conservation for approval.

Accordingly, the submission period will run from mid June until mid August 2011 and will be advertised in the Our Wellington page in the Dominion Post.

Anyone who wishes to be heard in support of their submission will have the opportunity to speak to Strategy and Policy Committee. This will happen, subject to need, in early September. The final management plan will be presented to SPC in October 2011 after any amendments resulting from the due consideration of submissions.

In addition to these statutory requirements, the communication plan for the Draft Point Dorset Reserve Management Plan includes a Council webpage, direct distribution to key stakeholders and previous submitters, distribution to libraries and Service Centres and meetings, if required, with community groups.

6. Conclusion

This draft reserve management plan has been developed in partnership with the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust after public feedback on the values, issues and future management for this site. Officers will report back on the public consultation in October. Once approved, the management plan will provide the Council and the Trust with a clear framework for day-to-day management and decision making for this reserve for the next 10 years.

Contact Officer:

Megan Duncan, Parks and Recreation Planner, Parks and Gardens and Mike Oates, Manager Open Space and Recreation Planning.

APPENDIX ONE: Draft Point Dorset Reserve Management Plan June 2011

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The draft management plan supports Council's Environment Strategy and Social and Recreation Strategy

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

Funding for Point Dorset Reserve is managed under several projects. Many of the implementation actions will be funded through existing budgets. Some new initiative funding may be required.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

The draft management plan has been developed with the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust. Further meetings will be held as part of the consultation process on the draft management plan.

4) Decision-Making

Committee are asked to approve this draft management plan so that the public consultation process can occur.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

Consultation has, and is, being carried out in accordance with the Reserves Act (1977).

b) Consultation with Maori

Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust have been involved in the development of this reserve management plan as they own the land. Consultation with Ngati Toa will occur during the formal consultation process.

6) Legal Implications

The preparation of this draft plan and consultation requirements will be based on the process in the Reserves Act 1977.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report and draft management plan is consistent with existing policy, including the South Coast Management Plan (2002), the Open Space Access Plan (2004), the Pest Management Plan (2005), the Biodiversity Action Plan (2007) Heritage Policy (2010), Dog Policy (2009).