

4.6 COASTAL RESOURCE AREA

4.6.1 - OVERVIEW

The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment is a matter of national importance under the Act. In order to determine what action, if any, Council should take in respect of the Coastal Resource Area, the coast was given special attention in Council's Landscape and Ecology Study. This study broke the coast down into eight units as follows:

- Catlins
- Estuaries
- Sandy Point - Riverton
- Riverton - Orepuki
- Te Wae Wae
- Fiordland
- Big Bay
- Stewart Island.

A brief prescription of each of these units appears in Section 1.8 of the Plan.

The Fiordland and Big Bay units are considered as part of 4.3 Fiordland Resource Area. The remaining units have been included in the Coastal Resource Area shown on the Planning Maps.

Also of significance to the coast and to this Plan are the following:

- The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement prepared by the Minister of Conservation, which sets out the broad framework for the management of the coastal environment
- The Regional Policy Statement, which takes into account the matters within the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, and provides the specific policy framework for the management of the coast within the Southland Region
- The Regional Coastal Plan, prepared in conjunction with the Minister of Conservation, which details the methods and procedures to manage the coastal marine area.

With respect to the coastal environment, therefore, a close relationship needs to be developed between Council, the Department of Conservation and the Regional Council.

The District Council's responsibilities and the provisions of this Plan cease at the landward boundary of the Coastal Marine Area as defined in the Act.

4.6.2 - THE ISSUES

The following are seen as the significant issues relating to the Coastal Resource Area:

- **The possibility of sea level rise, and its effect on low lying communities.**

Explanation

A number of sites within the district may be susceptible to sea level rise. The Royal Society of New Zealand 1990 report on climate change noted that sea level rise in New Zealand Ports since 1889 has averaged 16.7 (+ or - 2.3) cm/century, and has predicted that sea levels are likely to rise between 7 and 17 cm by the year 2025 and between 17 and 35 cm by the year 2050. What level Council should be planning for is yet to be determined as it has been promoted to Central Government that a national standard be set.

What is apparent however, is that settlements such as Colac Bay, Ringaringa, Orepuki, Cosy Nook and Curio Bay may be adversely affected by sea level rise. Development in these areas should be restricted where sea level and erosion have a potential adverse effect.

- **Land use and development can threaten wildlife habitats.**

Explanation

A number of significant wildlife habitats are located along the District's coastline. Several of these are home to rare and endangered species. These habitats are increasingly under threat from adjoining land uses and development.

- **Land use and development can degrade the quality of estuary and coastal water.**

Explanation

Land uses adjacent to both the estuary itself and the water bodies feeding estuaries can significantly affect quality through pollution, siltation and flow changes. As these water bodies are significant habitats, nurseries and recreation areas, these effects must be mitigated.

- **The natural character of the coast is threatened by inappropriate use and development.**

Explanation

Land development and the erection of structures can significantly effect the natural character of the Coastal Area. There are a number of areas where this threat is very real.

- **Lack of recognition in the past of the significance the coast has to Maori.**

Explanation

The coastal area represents various cultural, ancestral and traditional values to Maori. These have not always been recognised in the past.

Note: Also refer to **Section 4.4 Stewart Island Urban Resource Area**

4.6.3 - OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The majority of issues in the Coastal Resource Area are similar to those issues in the general Rural Resource Area (eg effects on water quality) and differ only on a number of issues unique to the coast. Consequently the objectives and policies of the Rural Resource Area also apply to the Coastal Resource Area except as otherwise provided in this Section. The Objectives and Policies of Section 4.4 Stewart Island Urban Resource Area are also applicable to the Coastal Resource Area as it applies to Stewart Island. The following objectives and policies are specific to the coast.

Objective COA.1

To preserve, as far as is practicable, the natural character of the coast from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
(Refer Policy COA.1 to 4 and Section 4.4 Stewart Island Urban Resource Area)

Objective COA.2

To recognise and provide for the importance of coastal resources to Maori.
(Refer Policy COA.5)

Objective COA.3

To minimise the adverse effects sea level rise may have on the natural and physical resources of the District.
(Refer Section 3.8 Natural Hazards)

Policy COA.1

To avoid or mitigate the adverse effects of building, and structures have on the coastal environment.

Explanation

Buildings and structures can have a significant effect on natural character. Council will retain control over the effects of their design and location.
(Refer Rule COA.2)

Policy COA.2

To avoid the adverse effects of development in the coastal area.

Explanation

Intensive development has the potential to compromise the natural character of the coastal environment.
(Refer Rule COA.2 and 3)

Policy COA.3

To avoid or remedy the adverse effects of activities on remaining significant indigenous vegetation and significant wildlife habitats of the coastal environment.

Explanation

A number of significant wildlife habitats exist in the District's coast (eg Yellow-eyed Penguin breeding areas). These habitats together with the remaining areas of significant indigenous vegetation are a major contributor to the natural character of the coast and also play an important role in protecting water quality of the area.
(Refer Rule COA.4)

Policy COA.4

To consult and work with the Minister of Conservation, the Regional Council and Manawhenua in resource management issues.

Explanation

The Act imposes duties on both the Minister of Conservation and the Regional Council in respect of the coast.

It is important that a consistent approach is adopted.

Maori have had a long association with the coast that extends well beyond that of European experience. The coast and its resources were necessary to Maori existence, with aspects of the area representing various cultural, ancestral and traditional values. Decisions on resource management issues in the coast need to reflect this.
(Refer Rule COA.1)

4.6.4 - METHODS AND RULES

All activities within the Coastal Resource Area shall take place in accordance with the relevant Methods, Rules and Performance Standards of the Plains Resource Area set out in Section 4.1.4 of this Plan unless this Section provides otherwise.

Rule COA.1 - Consultation with Iwi

Applicants, prior to making a Resource Consent application, and Council, in considering any Resource Consent application, shall consult with the Runaka that has kaitiaki in that particular area, and where relevant, The Department of Conservation and the Regional Council.

(Refer Method MAO.2)

Reason

Consultation with Iwi is particularly important in the Coastal Resource Area which is of great significance to the Manawhenua. Where Council considers it necessary consultation will also be carried out with DOC and the Regional Council.

Rule COA.2 - Buildings and Structures

Activities that have the effect of erecting a building or structure (excluding those buildings or structures that are permitted activities under Rule PRA.3) shall be considered as discretionary activities.

In assessing any application under this Rule, Council will consider the following:

- the ability of the site to dispose of wastes adequately
- noise generated by any associated activity
- access, parking and any impact on safety and the efficiency of the roading network
- the effect of the building and any associated signage on the natural character of the coast in terms of visual impact
- density of development in the area
- the effect of the building or structure on native flora and fauna.

Reason

The erection and density of buildings and structures in a coastal environment (excluding coastal urban areas) can have significant impact on the natural character. In order to minimise these effects and protect the natural character where practicable Discretionary Resource Consent is seen as the most appropriate control.

Rule COA.3 - Subdivision

Subdivision in the Coastal Resource Area shall be considered as a Discretionary Activity and shall be assessed in accordance with the relevant criteria of Section 3.6 Subdivision.

Reason

While subdivision itself can not be considered a land use as such, it is generally the forerunner of intensive development and often leads to pressure on Council to extend services or to consider an inappropriate activity at a later date. Discretionary status enables Council to refuse consent to subdivision that has potential cumulative effects that are not compatible with the natural character of the coast.

Rule COA.4 - Indigenous Flora and Fauna

This rule has been deleted from this District Plan following Environment Court Decision A039/01 (19 April 2001). Refer Section 3.4, particularly Rule HER.3 (Page 71) for provisions of the District Plan relating to this issue.

Rule COA.5 - Conservation Land

Any private development on any Crown land except as provided for by Section 4 of the Act shall be considered to be a discretionary activity and shall be assessed in accordance with the relevant objectives and policies of this Section of the Plan.

Reason

Development on Conservation land by private individuals is subject to the provisions of this plan. Considering the sensitive nature of this environment and the wide range of possible activities that could occur, discretionary resource consent was seen as the most appropriate course of action.

4.6.5 - ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

- (a) Protection of native flora and fauna.
- (b) Preservation of the coastal natural character of the coast where practicable.