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# Report of the Hearing Panel on proposed Variations to the Regional Parks Management Plan 2010 for Mahurangi and Te Muri

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## Executive Summary

1. The Hearing Panel, being Independent Commissioners Barry Kaye and Sheena Tepania, was appointed to consider submissions and make recommendations on proposed variations to the Regional Parks Management Plan 2010 ('RPMP'). The draft variation to the RPMP was notified for two months; from mid-January to 18 March 2016. An open day was held on the park on 20 February with over 50 people attending.
2. 383 submissions were received in total, including one late submission which was accepted by resolution of the Panel.
3. The purpose of the variation is to include Te Muri Regional Park into the management plan provisions and as a consequential matter to make minor amendments to the existing provisions for the Mahurangi Regional Park.
4. Panel members were independent Commissioners Barry Kaye (Panel Chairperson), and Sheena Tepania.
5. The panel considered the written submissions and heard from 14 submitters.
6. The panel would like to thank the submitters and staff whose contribution to the consultation process has been greatly appreciated.
7. After considering the views of submitters, the panel recommends amendments to the RPMP as set out in Attachment A.
8. The most significant changes include the following:
  - amendments to the current RPMP to include objectives, policies and guidelines relating to Te Muri;
  - amend the existing RPMP provisions in respect of Mahurangi Regional Park so as to reflect the new management plan provisions for Te Muri;
  - add a new definition of destination mountain biking.

## Recommendations

That the Governing Body:

9. receive and adopt the recommendations of the Hearings Panel on the variation to the Regional Parks Management Plan as contained in this report.
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## Background

10. This hearing panel was appointed to hear submissions, deliberate and make recommendations to the Governing Body on the proposed variation to the Regional Parks Management Plan 2010.
  11. The draft variation to the RPMP was notified for two months; from mid-January to 18 March 2016.
    - An open day was held on 20 February on the park with over 50 people attending.
    - 383 submissions were received in total, including one late submission.
    - Ngāti Manuhiri provided a Cultural Values Assessment and Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara a formal response to the variation. A meeting with Ngāti Manuhiri and Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara in April 2016 provided a further verbal submission that was minuted. A copy of both responses and the minute were requested by the Panel and received 15 August 2016.
    - Council had included a questionnaire on Shape Auckland and received submissions from 165 people (43%) via this format.
    - 102 (27%) submissions were also received via email.
    - Only one submission was received via mail.
    - 170 submissions (44%) were submitted as 'proformas' on behalf of Mahurangi Action, of these 131 sent in long-form proformas being a duplicate of the Council's questionnaire with two additional questions relating to support for the Mahurangi Coastal Trail and an additional section for the Te Araroa walkway. 122 of these were received as hard copies and 9 were emailed. There were a further 39 short-form proformas, also received via email, which did not include the questionnaire. These proformas made up 47% of the emailed submissions.
    - 7 submitters were found to have submitted both via the Shape Auckland questionnaire and email; while 3 submitters submitted via the Mahurangi Action hardcopy proforma and emailed as well. These duplicates were combined, so not accounted for twice in the analysis. Two submitters have submitted twice either on behalf of two different groups or on behalf of a group and as an individual submitter.
    - One submission included a petition with 46 signatories supporting the submission.
    - Submissions were received from the following groups:
      - Auckland Mountain Bike Club
      - Dune Restoration Trust of NZ
      - Friends of Regional Parks
      - Hibiscus Coast Branch, Forest and Bird Society
      - Manu Waiata Restoration and Protection Society
      - New Zealand Motor Caravan Association
      - NZ Horse Networking
      - New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA)
      - Mahurangi Action
      - Mahurangi Coastal Trail Trust
      - Mahurangi Magazine
      - North West Orienteering Club
      - Orewa Sea Scout Group
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- Pūhoi Canoes
  - Pūhoi Community Forum
  - Pūhoi Historical Society Inc.
  - Warkworth Area Forest and Bird.
- 8 submissions were anonymous.
  - 121 people indicated they wished to speak to their submissions – of these 75% opposed the development of the central park road and the creation of a parking area behind the beach. Forty one submitters wished to be heard and were in support of Mahurangi Action’s proposals.
  - Lists of all submitters to the draft variation, ordered alphabetically and numerically, were attached as Appendices A and B to the hearings report.
  - A list of all the submitters supporting Mahurangi Action’s proposals was included in Attachment C to the hearings report. That identified if the submitter had completed the long proforma, the short proforma only or through an individual email. In the themed summary sheets set out in the hearings report, these submissions were referred to as MAS (Mahurangi Action submissions).

## Overview of written and verbal submissions

12. The results of the questionnaire survey were set out in the hearings report and are repeated below.

<b>Council’s feedback form questions – Do you support...</b>	<b>% support</b>	<b>* % oppose</b>	<b>% * unsure</b>
Implementing pest plant and animal control programmes	97%	2%	2%
Implementing further fencing of the wetlands, riparian areas & coastal forest ecosystems	90%	5%	4%
Protecting archaeological features and pa sites	95%	2%	3%
Providing interpretation of the cultural, historic & natural heritage of the park	89%	5%	5%
Ongoing engagement with mana whenua to determine what they specifically value and how they can be involved with the park	81%	9%	10%
Developing a main arrival area at the park entrance at the end of Hungry Creek Rd, including: parking, toilets and visitor information	27%	70%	3%
Investigate with NZ Transport Agency and Auckland Transport the upgrade of Hungry Creek Road to provide safer access to the park	24%	72%	4%
Investigating the future improvement to the central road to enable safe public vehicle access through the park	13%	82%	4%
Preparation of a concept plan and development of a further arrival area set back from the beach with parking, toilets and visitor information	12%	83%	5%
Expansion of the existing campground and pulling this back from the beach	60%	31%	9%
Developing a network of tracks that cater for walking, running, biking and horse-riding	86%	9%	5%
Investigating the use of the houses, not required for operational	78%	15%	7%

purposes, as each escapes

Investigating the construction of a pedestrian bridge across the Te Muri Stream that would also provide for operational access	73%	21%	5%
Investigating options to provide access across the Pūhoi River	75%	19%	6%
Maintaining the farm operation and infrastructure	88%	4%	8%
Determining the future use and management of the exotic woodlots	86%	5%	9%
Establishing and maintaining relationships with adjacent landowners, volunteers, recreation groups, schools and potential concessionaires to assist in the development, management and use of the park.	85%	5%	10%

## Submission summary / themes

13. A summary of the 383 submissions were sorted into themes in the hearings report. Access to the park and the retention of the remote experience were by far the most dominant themes of the submissions. The submissions were analysed according to those two themes and sorted as follows:

- Park experience
    - vision
    - management focus
  - Access
    - Hungry Creek Rd access and main arrival area
    - central park road and beach arrival area
    - Te Muri Stream crossing
    - Pūhoi River crossing
    - Other access suggestions
  - Natural Settings
    - pest control
    - fencing
    - other
  - Cultural and Historic Settings
  - Farm Settings
    - woodlots
  - Recreation and Use Management
    - track network
    - horses
    - biking
    - Te Araroa
    - camping
    - baches
    - interpretation
    - education
    - visitor facilities
    - dogs
    - events and commercial activities
    - orienteering
  - Mana whenua
  - Principal Relationships
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14. A very detailed and comprehensive analysis of the submissions was set out in the hearings report and is not repeated here.

## **Summary of Evidence presented at the Hearing**

15. Mr. Olsen confirmed in response to questions from the Panel that the land is held in fee simple by the Council and therefore the Local Government Act was the main legislative framework under which this hearing was held. He noted that the Council had used the formal process adopted under the Reserves Act for consistency and as a proven process that people understand. We agree that is a practical approach to the progressing of the proposed variations to the RPMP.

### **Mr. Roger and Ms. Patte Williams (117)**

16. Mr. and Ms. Roger and Patte Williams appeared at the hearing and gave a presentation noting their experience in forest restoration and track development. A civil and structural engineer, Mr. Williams outlined their vision for Te Muri which included protection of natural flora and fauna and restoration of the Park to its natural state, seeking a refuge from “our motorised environment”, a unique learning experience and the operation of a sustainable Farm Park component. Mr. Williams considered school outdoor experiences, the types of visitors that might be encouraged to Te Muri and the importance of the link with Te Araroa Trail. He was of the view that a footbridge across the Pūhoi River was required for such link to Te Araroa Trail to be viable. He referred to his experience with the Mahurangi Coastal Trail having investigated a future crossing for Te Muri Stream which led to a proposal for the Pūhoi River crossing using a similar bridge structure which he detailed further in his presentation. Mr. Williams also suggested a solution for an interim crossing and the need for promotion of a Marine Reserve at Te Muri.

### **Mr. Warwick and Ms. Hueline Masey (165)**

17. Mr. Masey referred to his own submission and that of Warkworth Forest and Bird. He noted familiarity with Mahurangi West, Te Muri and Wenderholm Regional Parks and supported the submission by Mr. and Ms. Williams (117). He too highlighted the importance of the Mahurangi Coastal Trail and the need for a link to the Te Araroa Trail. He considered a footbridge from Wenderholm would give a ‘unique sense of arrival’ and also supported the encouragement of educational opportunities within the Park.

### **Mr. Arapeta Hamilton (see Agenda page 289)**

18. Ms. Van Kampen and Mr. Peter Van Kampen Junior presented a written statement on behalf of Arapeta Hamilton and the Pomare whanau and recalled their descent from Ngāti Rongo o Mahurangi and their connection with Te Muri. They sought specific recognition from Council of Ngāti Rongo o Mahurangi and and Ngā Uri o Pomare II traditional rights to the area. They highlighted the need to protect the intrinsic values of the Park and in particular the existing urupā (cemetery), requesting co-management of the waahi tapu gifted for a burial ground for Ngāti Rongo and asked that it be re-opened for burials in future. The written submission asks that Ngāti Rongo o Mahurangi form a joint management group with Council for the remainder of the Park and that they are consulted on any future development.
  19. In response to questions from the panel they confirmed existing relationships with Ngāti Manuhiri in particular and agreed that such recognition might be satisfied by ensuring that policies were worded in an inclusive way so as not to exclude any particular group from future involvement.
  20. They also requested that the Park be called “Te Muri o Tarariki” in accordance with its full traditional name, Mr Van Kampen Junior noted that the full name is stated on marine charts.
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### **NZ Horseriders (Vivien Dostine) (137)**

21. Ms. Vivien Dostine, President of NZ Horse Network, presented on behalf of the organisation, referring to her original and extensive submission and a presentation responding primarily to the Officer's Report. Ms. Dostine urged Council to open the Park now with clear notification of the current limited access and facilities. She noted the Park was purchased in 2010 but that the proposed opening for recreation will not be until 2020 and considered this timeline "for opening greenspace to the public who have paid for it", unacceptable. Ms. Dostine supported keeping access to the Park by vehicles to a minimum and only developing an arrivals area at options 1 and 2. Her original submission highlighted the opportunities that exist in developing access from Mahurangi West particularly in relation to the potential for parking at the Mahurangi Woolshed, the potential use of the woolshed and existing infrastructure such as yards.
22. Ms. Dostine cautioned that while the Officer's Report states simply that horse riding is permitted on 11 regional parks, implying that there is a lot of access available for horse riders across the regional park network, in fact the number of such parks is incorrect and more likely to be 8 which is also consistent with the advice given in the Council's Regional Parks Network Horse Riding Pass Information. She noted further that such access is often limited and only suitable for local riders or problematic when having to contend with multiple types of users.
23. Ms. Dostine did not consider that the numerous cultural and archaeological sites within areas should prevent some user groups from accessing an entire park but that restricting access to specific areas and fencing them off should suffice. She observed that this has been done in other places such as the Woodhill Forest horse park which is managed by Nga Maunga Whakahii o Kaipara.
24. In noting her response to other submitters Ms. Dostine emphasised the wide and diverse types of people who own and ride horses and the lack of places to ride compared to the numerous greenspace options available and accessible to walkers and runners all year round adding that access to regional parks needs to be equitable for all who pay for them (ratepayers). She spoke in support of trail and space sharing and discussed the part that horses have in our history, heritage and culture adding in the relevance of beach access and swimming with horses as part of that culture.
25. Like other submitters Ms. Dostine was also of the view that access to the park should not be dependent on the upgrading of Hungry Creek Road. She did not agree that horses crossing the stream would "create any greater disturbance than (greater numbers of) human legs" and in relation to wading birds pointed out that, "both Okura and Whitford have horse riding and birds co-existing through sensible management practices that are respected."
26. In concluding Ms. Dostine noted extensive support from the horse riding community to include horse riding at Te Muri.

### **Auckland Mountain Bike Club (168)**

27. The Auckland Mountain Bike Club (MBC) representative (Meryn Hemmingson) spoke to her presentation and outlined the Club's involvement in the variation to date. She noted that the size of Te Muri in particular provides an ideal opportunity to encourage mountain biking and build destination mountain bike trails with manageable effects. The MBC submission emphasised the importance of developing a network of suitable trails with relevant expertise as opposed to simply allowing it to be 'permitted'. We were told that the MBC used volunteer labour to build any trails themselves.
  28. It was submitted that there needed to be more destination mountain bike areas/trails in Auckland north to cater to demand. The destination would attract usage from those living in Central, West and North Auckland including Rodney. At present the only options they have for destination mountain biking are Hunua and Woodhill with Hunua having taken the last 10 years to develop and Woodhill being heavily utilised.
  29. Suggested amendments were made to policies 25 and 27 of the variation and further
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encouragement given to the panel to consider the MBC's submissions in relation to Policy 26. In relation to Map 24, the importance of the gradient in track design was explained along with the concern that the proposed trail as indicated on the map was a farm track that was not developed with mountain biking in mind and appeared too steep to create a trail network of widespread use. Support was given to the retention of pine trees as a great canopy to ride under with the request that the Action Plan provide for use of the pine plantation for 1km of trails per hectare with other trails through some of the farmland.

30. The MBC suggested that the MTB trail grading system be used and recommended the types of bike tracks that would be suitable for the location and demand asking that the variation provide for:
  - “A network of cross-country mountain biking trails (family / grade 2 loop) – 15km + (Policy 25/Map 24);
  - A network of dedicated / purpose built cross-country mountain biking trails (experienced / grade 3 upwards) – 15km + (Policy 26)...
  - Establishing the trail network as part of any future NZ Cycle Trail in the area”.
31. Like other submitters the MBC requested earlier access to Te Muri, rather than waiting for the upgrade of Hungry Creek Road as suggested by Policy 26.
32. In response to questions from the panel, the need for a definition for “destination mountain biking” was discussed and the MBC was invited to provide a suitable definition for consideration by the Panel should the panel be minded to suggest its inclusion in the variation. A proposed definition was received by the panel on 22 August 2016 prior to the hearing being closed.
33. That definition was as follows;

*“Destination mountain biking areas are usually in rural, remote or scenic areas where riders have to drive or travel to get to. In Auckland, destination mountain biking is most likely, although not exclusively, in designated rurally located Regional Parks. With the need to travel to destination mountain biking areas, the rider should be rewarded with: basic amenities appropriate for the intrinsic values of the area, shared and dedicated mountain biking trails offering a range of trail difficulties and experiences, a minimum ‘ride time’ of 60 to 120 minutes, and a trail network with the ability to host cross-country, enduro, and cyclo-cross mountain biking events.”*

#### **Elizabeth Light (19)**

34. Ms. Light highlighted the isolated and unique nature of the farm and beach at Te Muri. She acknowledged the decision by the Officers not to recommend parking immediately behind the beach and supported that there be no public vehicle access through the Park. She did not support Campervans and Caravans and suggested that they go to Sullivan's and Wenderholm.
35. Ms. Light considered that a bigger carpark was needed at the end of Ngarewa Drive but that Ngarewa Drive would also need a substantial upgrade as it is not fully sealed and walkers along Ngarewa Drive and the lack of footpaths also need to be considered. She noted her concern with accidents in the area and the extent to which an increase in traffic would add to the lack of safety. Ms. Light did not object to a carpark at the end of Hungry Creek Road.
36. In response to questions Ms. Light added that Ngarewa Drive would need a walking path and that allowing horse floats and large campervans to pass on most areas of Ngarewa Drive would be impossible.

#### **Cimino Cole (184/201)**

37. Mr. Cole spoke to his original submission and also presented on behalf of Mahurangi Action Incorporated (Mahurangi Action). Proponents of the Mahurangi Coastal Trail, Mahurangi Action submit that Wenderholm, Te Muri and Mahurangi West should be
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viewed as the huge contiguous coastline that it is and integrated into one magnificent single park entity. Mr. Cole did not agree that Te Muri would disappear off map if the park was to be known as Mahurangi Regional Park and compared the proposal to the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park emphasising how the differing components such as Piha and Te Henga-Bethells, still maintain their own name and identity.

38. Mr. Cole discussed the potential a cable ferry at Te Muri would provide, noting that it would have less impact on the environment and on the visual landscape. Mahurangi Action was particularly keen to help with investigating that option and supported Council's encouragement of robust investigation of alternatives.
39. Mr. Cole suggested rewording section 17.24.3 regarding the intersection and access upgrade. He pointed out that waiting for the upgrade to Hungry Creek Road would render Te Araroa unworkable.
40. In response to questions by the panel Mr. Cole considered camping could be extended with the potential for an area to allow random (or flexi) camping and use of more than just the coastal terrace.
41. Ms. Tessa Berger also spoke to the Mahurangi Action submission and of the opportunity for the Mahurangi coastal trail to be the 50<sup>th</sup> legacy anniversary project. She referred to the special essence of Te Muri and in response to questions confirmed that a coastal trail would address the interests of walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

#### **Kathy Walker (69)**

42. Ms. Walker recorded her opposition to any access or development of Hungry Creek Road and outlined the reasons for her perspective and potential solutions. She supported access from Ngarewa Drive and was supportive of equestrian access with time limitations. She considered that Wenderholm had well established parking facilities and that a bridge from Wenderholm should provide an alternative access walkway. Ms. Walker supported camping access remaining at Ngarewa Drive (with a pedestrian bridge over the inlet) but was not supportive of camper van / caravan access to Te Muri noting that Wenderholm should suffice for this.

#### **James Buttle (13)**

43. Mr. Buttle spoke to his original submission and highlighted his previous experience as an oyster farmer in the area. In terms of access he considered that the Pūhoi River was the most obvious access and that the Wenderholm River presented quite a barrier. He had seen both proposals for a footbridge and barge and considered that the clear winner was the footbridge. He noted that some of the alternatives were problematic because of tidal flows and the cost of infrastructure. He pointed out that the tides could be substantial across the river mouth and that there was also a sandbank in the middle which would mean that use of a barge would be a challenge.
  44. Mr. Buttle supported the presentation by Mr. Williams that a basic footbridge did not have to be costly. He considered that a simple bridge with a removable section on a booking system would suffice as currently few boats go up the Pūhoi and there is only one jetty of substance on the river. He was strongly against access from Hungry Creek Road and noted how dangerous the road is.
  45. Mr. Buttle pointed out that the visual effects needed to be weighed up with the benefits of allowing increased numbers of people who want to use the Park to walk across and enjoy the environment and bush there and be able to do so all year round. A footbridge would enable this.
  46. In response to questions from the panel Mr. Buttle confirmed that amendments to those parts of the variation that still referred to campervans / caravans having access through the park needed to be made (pp 130 & 154 of the Agenda). He considered that the downsides to a water based crossing by cable barge for example are that it is a reasonably deep channel and there is a bar in the middle which may be problematic. He noted that a 3 or 4 knot current would provide serious impact to a barge and concluded
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that overall, on balance, a footbridge would be a better outcome.

### **Steve Reid (17)**

47. Mr. Reid spoke to his original submission and supported keeping Te Muri as a “sanctuary of sound”. He agreed with Mr. Buttle’s submission and also discussed the benefits of access for the disabled to Te Muri.

### **Sam Tracy (41)**

48. Mr. Sam Tracy spoke to his submission and asked that Te Muri be kept as unspoiled as possible. He suggested there be no greater vehicle access than is presently the case with people being able to walk across Te Muri stream to access the Friar’s Cottage if it is to be used as an ‘escape’. He suggested the top house was best left for volunteers. Mr. Tracy did not see the need for a bridge over Te Muri Stream and thought it unwise to allow equestrian access across the stream given it is a sensitive ecological area, but considered there was ample room for on the farm for both horse trails and bike trails to be separately accommodated. He did not agree with vehicle based camping but suggested the campground could be expanded in future. He too acknowledged the Officer decision not to recommend parking at the beach, was not supportive of a visitor centre and associated infrastructure and preferred that Te Muri be left a ‘pack in pack out place’.

### **Annemarie Farrell (173)**

49. Ms. Annemarie Farrell, a member of the Schischka family, presented her written submission outlining her relationship and that of her family to Te Muri and the history behind the sale to ARC. She highlighted the special character of Te Muri and its relative unspoilt remoteness, quiet and peace, expressing her relief and gratitude that the proposal to develop the central road and create an arrivals area behind the beach had now been dropped and noting that “it would have been a betrayal of Te Muri and of the good intention and hope that selling to the ARC had implied”.
  50. Ms. Farrell emphasised the need to preserve the relative solitude of Te Muri and avoid the issues associated with vehicles and the need to park them particularly given the nearby beaches that already provide vehicle access. She noted her support for keeping the vehicle access to Te Muri limited to a service road only and said she felt “very strongly that access to Te Muri should remain mostly by walking or boat”.
  51. In terms of access over the Te Muri Stream, Ms. Farrell indicated that whilst she had originally expressed support for developing a parking area on the north side of the stream, she did so more because it was “the lesser of two evils” but she felt strongly that overall the impact must be as minimal and low key as possible to avoid spoiling Te Muri. She preferred that the crossing be kept as it is with a boardwalk at the most if necessary but not a bridge.
  52. Ms. Farrell commented on alternate options for access such as keeping Hungry Creek Road as an access for pedestrians, cycles and potentially horses or exploring further the connection with Pūhoi and an under pass. In response to questions Ms. Farrell considered that walkers and trampers should have priority over bikes and was unsure about horses. She added that money should be spent on trails and not infrastructure for access.
  53. Highlighting some of the special aspects of Te Muri such as the abundant birdlife thanks to the abundance of native trees and the potential ‘experiences’ it provides, Ms. Farrell recorded her support that the camping facilities at Te Muri should remain basic to allow people who value and appreciate such camping experiences to enjoy “getting away from it all”. She supported continuing the farm operations so that children in particular can learn and enjoy the experience. She also encouraged the Council to get on with allowing one or two of the houses to be used as temporary accommodation such as through the book-a-bach system.
  54. In concluding Ms. Farrell emphasised the importance of Council valuing and respecting Te
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Muri, “so that its character and beauty and spirit of quiet are retained forever now and for future generations.”

**Mr. Bill Burrill (185)**

55. Mr. Bill Burrill, Chairman of Friends of Regional Parks referred to his submission endorsing the submission lodged by Mahurangi Action and the Mahurangi Coastal Trail Trust. Supported by Mr. Ralph Lyon, Mr. Burrill presented a written statement detailing the importance of the Mahurangi Coastal trail as a vital link between Wenderholm, Te Muri and Sullivan’s. Mr. Burrill recorded support for efforts to access Te Muri on foot both from Wenderholm and Ngarewa Drive highlighting the solitude and beauty of Te Muri. Both Mr. Lyon and Mr. Burrill pointed out that the importance of the timing proposed for the development of the trail and considered that tying the investigation of pedestrian access to the redevelopment of Hungry Creek Road was unrealistic and unnecessary. They commented on the poor state of Hungry Creek Road, and did not think such redevelopment was likely to occur in the next decade. As they pointed out, “you are not dealing with a roading issue; you are dealing with a park”. By contrast they considered that a coastal trail link could resolve the matter at low cost and low impact. Mr. Burrill supported investigation of alternate options for estuary crossings and in response to questions from the panel noted that investigation of a pedestrian bridge option and boat traffic up to Pūhoi had to be looked at. He considered the reality of boat traffic and the nature of it has to be looked at particularly as he did not recall ever seeing a boat anchored off Te Muri. He concluded his submission highlighting that the remoteness of the area, so close to the city is unique and needs to be treasured.

**Kathryn Mankelow/Sorrel O’Leary (Pūhoi River Canoe Hire and Pūhoi Community Forum) (83)**

56. Kathy Mankelow and Sorrel O’Leary, on behalf of Pūhoi River Canoe Hire and Pūhoi Community Forum, gave a joint presentation of their submissions. They outlined some of the key factors that needed to be considered by Council including Auckland’s rapid population increase and the need to manage visitor numbers and traffic congestion. Ms. O’Leary highlighted the environmental and conservation responsibilities Council have and the need to consider the concerns of Mana Whenua, archaeological features, sustainability of breeding sites for endangered birds and maintaining the sense of isolation that Te Muri offers.
57. Ms. Mankelow noted that in her view, the submissions received by Council in respect of the Variation indicate overwhelming opposition to any vehicle access using Hungry Creek Road however, she highlighted her concern that Council appeared to still be considering future development of a parking area at the Hungry Creek Road Park entrance in the short term with a view to long term development of an access road further into the Park.
58. There was some discussion around the effective use of surrounding infrastructure. Ms. Mankelow and Ms. O’Leary suggested that Auckland Parks (Council) support the proposal to utilise Crown land that has been purchased for the motorway construction on the left northern side of the Pūhoi River and use this as a carpark for access to Te Muri. They noted that there will be an underpass of SH1 (will be SH17) and suggested construction of a walk/bike/horse trail to Te Muri Park via roadway/road reserve/paper road planned by Auckland Parks in conjunction with Auckland Transport. They went on to suggest that this connecting road and access to the Park can then be opened (2022) as soon as the motorway construction is complete.
59. Ms. Mankelow outlined the ways in which this alternate carpark, with correct planning, will then provide opportunity for maximum connectivity, sustainability and land use for the entire community. She noted the opportunity for Council to “showcase how the Supercity amalgamation can plan, unite and execute all the resources available to create a connected sustainable environment that works for everyone.” Ms. Mankelow made the point that Auckland Parks needed to think beyond the boundaries of the park and to use all available resources to connect all three parks to each other and the entire community adding, “...with proper planning and project management there is enough Crown land,
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riverside/roadside reserve and paper road to construct a proper walkway/cycleway between the proposed Pūhoi Intersection Park n Ride Carpark and the Wenderholm Regional Park.” Ms. O’Leary added that she supported establishing links between existing trails, to linking Te Araroa to Te Muri and Wenderholm and to lining Pūhoi to a Regional Parks coastal trail network.

60. In relation to her original submission for Pūhoi River Canoe Hire, Ms. Mankelow recorded that she no longer supported the bridge across the Wenderholm Estuary/Pūhoi River and questioned why one would compromise one beautiful place to access another. She stated that “...compromising this beautiful estuary with an open span bridge to accommodate a very small number of yachts to get up to the Pūhoi Road Bridge on appointment is just not feasible or necessary.” Ms. O’Leary also noted that she did not agree with bridging either the Pūhoi River or Te Muri–o–Tarariki (the Te Muri stream). She was concerned about the visual and ecological impact and noted that we have an Outstanding Natural Feature in an Outstanding Natural Landscape. Linking Wenderholm/Pūhoi via a chain ferry had potential in her view.
61. Ms. O’Leary was supportive of the Council developing specified trails for horses and mountain bikes whilst also protecting fragile areas. She also noted that restoration planting was not recognised in the plan as a ‘recreational activity’.

### **Tabled submissions**

62. The panel received tabled submissions [in the absence of the submitters] from Dr. David Williams and Mr. Geoff Mead of the North West Orienteering Club. Both submitters reaffirmed their original submissions.

## **Key Issues and Findings-by Topic**

### **Quality and type of experience visitors seek at Te Muri**

63. Submitters commented on the quality of experience they sought at Te Muri. The majority of submissions indicated strong support for retaining the current type and quality of experience and levels of use. They described the need to retain the existing quality of experience at Te Muri noting its sense of “remoteness” and “tranquility” and stated that this is a “special” and “unique” quality of this park that should be retained. Some submitters described the “untouched serenity” of an “undeveloped and unspoilt” “natural beachscape” at Te Muri and made the point that “once these qualities are lost they are gone forever”.
  64. Mahurangi Action submitters noted they greatly value the sense of ‘splendid isolation’ that Te Muri currently affords and consider a coastal trail to be a reasonable means by which many more people could enjoy the new regional parkland, without losing this rare and precious quality.
  65. Most saw the existing access to Te Muri beach by foot across Te Muri Stream at low tide as contributing to its special character and was part of the experience of visiting or camping at Te Muri. As a corollary, they saw the proposal to bring vehicular traffic to a point behind the beach as a retrograde step that would destroy the special qualities of Te Muri. It was noted that the sense of remoteness and the fact that people had to make the effort to get to the campground added to the camping experience.
  66. They also noted that people seeking to drive close to a beach or to a campground can do this at many other locations in the region, including northern regional parks such as Long Bay, Shakespear and Wenderholm. Those qualities were the point of difference at Te Muri as opposed to other the regional parks on the north-east coast.
  67. One submission (98 -Mahurangi Action) - advocated rationalising Mahurangi, Te Muri and Wenderholm regional parkland as one Mahurangi Regional Park. They also submitted that the beach and coastal terrace should be optimised predominantly for picnicking and other day uses and that the “wilderness” camping opportunities, which are a unique
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feature of Te Muri should be maximised.

68. We agree with the reporting officers where they note that one of the values people ascribe to regional parks is the fact that they offer visitors access to tracts of undeveloped coastline. This is an increasingly valued attribute of regional parks as the population of the region increases and more of the coastline comes under pressure for development. Once the northern motorway has been extended and access is easier, the regional parks on the north-eastern coast are likely to become more attractive to visitors and will also come under more pressure by visitors.
69. We were told that one of the reasons that the land behind Te Muri beach was purchased by the Council was in order to retain the special landscape qualities of the location and to prevent these being destroyed by 'residential' development which may have occurred on the land over time, albeit even if at a low density.
70. Te Muri beach is unusual in that while the public have had access to the beach since 1987 it has only been accessible by wading across Te Muri Stream or by boat. This has meant that visitor numbers have been relatively low, apart from those camping on the park during the peak summer months. This creates a level of 'exclusivity' that is enjoyed by those prepared to make the effort to get there. Given that many of the other regional parks on the north-east coast are already accessible by vehicle, retaining Te Muri's relative remoteness will help to retain its point of difference and 'uniqueness'.
71. However, other views are that there is a need to maximise the public investment in purchasing the hinterland behind Te Muri beach and to facilitate greater access to it and thus increase visitor numbers.
72. On balance and taking into consideration the unique and intrinsic qualities of Te Muri, we have concluded that the appropriate vision for Te Muri is to retain its relative remoteness by limiting vehicle access to the western end of the park and by providing pedestrian and cycling access across Te Muri Stream from Mahurangi Regional Park. It is also our opinion that the beach and flat land behind the beach be made a Special Management Zone in terms of Section 7.5 of the RPMP 2010 in order to retain the intrinsic qualities of this area [which many submitters seek] while allowing for an appropriate level of use and types of activity.
73. The submission that Te Muri together with Wenderholm and Mahurangi West be integrated into a single park entity (Mahurangi Regional Park) has operational implications noting they will all be managed in an integrated way from the park depot at Wenderholm in any case.
74. If Te Muri is to retain its identified sense of isolation then it would in our opinion be more appropriate that it retains a clear and separate identity. Also, historically Wenderholm was the first regional park and accordingly it is appropriate that it should retain its separate identity. Equally important, mana whenua have stated they would not like to see the loss of Te Muri as a name. As officers note and we agree:

*"The question of the recognition of agglomerations of regional parks is better addressed in the context of the pending review of the RPMP 2010 as a whole".*

## **Access**

75. Hungry Creek Road is a narrow, winding, and in places, a steep gravel rural road and the intersection with State Highway 1 (SH1) is particularly hazardous for vehicles travelling north and turning into Hungry Creek Road. We were advised that discussions with Auckland Transport (AT) and the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) have confirmed that it would be unwise for the Council to utilise Hungry Creek Road as an access point to Te Muri, especially for heavy vehicles such as horse floats, unless it was upgraded and the SH1 intersection made safer.
  76. NZTA propose to construct a new highway north of the Johnson's Hill tunnel – as part of the Ara Tūhono project – Pūhoi to Wellsford highway bypass. This will divert the bulk of traffic from the current SH1. The construction of the new highway is not programmed to
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be completed till 2022, at which stage the management of the old SH1 will be transferred to AT. AT advice is that while it would be possible to upgrade Hungry Creek Road to provide safe two-way traffic, it would necessitate sealing the road and would possibly cost in the order of \$2-3 million. Apparently the intersection can be improved by creating a right-turn lane and road reserve is wide enough to accommodate that.

77. A number of submitters pointed out that as these factors are outside the immediate influence of the Council, it was not reasonable to restrict the public's use of Te Muri to this constraint when alternative access is available by way of a crossing of the Te Muri Stream and may be made available across the Pūhoi River or via land routes from Pūhoi Village. They particularly did not want the investigation of the possible alternative access options delayed until Hungry Creek Road was upgraded.
  78. AT is responsible for the upgrade of Hungry Creek Road and advised that there are no current plans to upgrade Hungry Creek Road and that this work is not currently a priority for them given the small number of people currently serviced by the road.
  79. Based on the information in front of us the upgrade of Hungry Creek Road and the options of providing a visitor arrival area on the park at the end on Hungry Creek Road are not a realistic option in the next 6 to 10 years and maybe even longer. In the longer term, the upgrading of this road may be necessary to enable vehicle access to an arrival area just within the park boundary as a means to activate the recreational potentials of the hinterland of the park. That may be a future option but should be addressed when it becomes a real option and a full round of consultation entered into at that time.
  80. The main public access options at Te Muri were described to us to be as follows:
    - Vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist access via Hungry Creek Road;
    - Pedestrian and cyclist access across the Te Muri Stream from Ngarewa Drive (Mahurangi Regional Park);
    - Pedestrian and potentially cyclist access across the Pūhoi River from Wenderholm Regional Park;
    - Other access options, such by land-based routes, sea or public transport.
  81. The submissions showed overwhelming opposition to vehicular access to Te Muri and there was strong support for pedestrian access by bridges across either Te Muri Stream or the Pūhoi River. There was also a strong lobby for access for various recreational activities on the parks, including horse riding, all of which will require access either on foot and/or by vehicle.
  82. The majority of submitters opposed the creation of an arrival area on the park at the end of Hungry Creek Road. That position relates in part to the opposition to the idea of upgrading the farm track running through the park and the allied proposal to provide an arrival area behind Te Muri beach alongside the concerns many submitters had about the safety and capacity of Hungry Creek Road.
  83. The reporting officers advised us that provision of an arrival area at the western end of the park at the Hungry Creek Road entrance, can only be supported if and when Hungry Creek Road is upgraded but in their view was necessary in the longer term in order to provide the opportunity for visitors to access the park for a range of recreational purposes without the need to travel any distance into the park.
  84. Such an arrival area could in the officer's view be made the primary hub for the recreational trail network on the park and would maximise the recreational potential of the park without in their view detracting from the relative remote experience that most submitters seek to retain.
  85. The strong opposition to the upgrade of the central park road was linked to the opposition to an arrival area being created behind Te Muri Beach. The reasons for opposing the upgrade of the central road were similar to those for retaining the existing character of Te Muri as a remote and undeveloped natural area. The upgrade of the road was seen by
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submitters as an unnecessary expense and they considered that resources would be better devoted to any conservation programs for the park [or on other council projects].

86. We were told that the Council invested \$15 million dollars in acquiring the additional land at Te Muri. While one of the reasons for this purchase was to protect the land, which forms the backdrop to Te Muri Beach, from future development, it was noted (by the officers) that the people of the region should be able to benefit from this investment by having access to a range of recreational purposes.
  87. We generally concur with the reporting officers advice that the level of use permitted must be balanced against the quality of experience that visitors want to have at the park and the protection and enhancement of the parks natural, mana whenua and heritage values. As noted above, there was strong support for keeping the intrinsic qualities that Te Muri currently has.
  88. A number of submitters, including a number of horse riders, supported the Pūhoi Community Forum's (submission 59) proposal for a parking area on the western side of the current SH1 with a crossing to Hungry Creek Road for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders to service the park and the Te Araroa Trail.
  89. The two rounds of public consultation resulted in strong opposition to public vehicle access through the park as being costly, unnecessary and that it would compromise park users' enjoyment by having traffic on the narrow central road which many saw as forming the backbone of the trail system within the park.
  90. While it may not be necessary to upgrade the road for visitor traffic it will still need to be maintained as a service road for the operation of the park, including the farming operations, such as the movement of stock trucks. This road will form one of the main arterials for the track network.
  91. Many submitters supported the Mahurangi Action Groups (MAS) proposal for the Te Muri farm road to be made part of the Te Araroa Trail. This would necessitate providing safe crossing of SH1, perhaps with an underpass, and completing the link to Wenderholm across the Pūhoi River via a bridge or along its southern banks. The Te Araroa currently traverses from Pūhoi Village to SH1 where walkers must either kayak down the Pūhoi River or use the state highway to join up with the trail at Wenderholm. The Te Araroa Trust has confirmed they are continuing to explore all possible options, including the trail traversing along the southern edge of the Pūhoi River utilising private land and esplanade strips. There are however gaps in the esplanade strips along this route and some current land owners are not supportive of this action.
  92. Based on the evidence and on balance we recommend that the central park road not be upgraded for visitor traffic. It should however be retained as the 'spine' to the recreation trail network and will need to be maintained as a serviceable road for park operations and farm management purposes.
  93. There was overwhelming opposition to creating the main arrival area to the park behind Te Muri Beach. The reasons for this opposition relate to the desire to retain the existing quality of experience at Te Muri.
  94. The reporting officers recommended that due to the significant opposition to this proposal that this policy be removed. We agree with that change to the notified provisions.
  95. There was significant support in the submissions for the development of a pedestrian bridge across the Te Muri stream as part of the trail. Submitters noted that the lack of an all-tide access limits reasonable public access, particularly in winter when many walkers are unprepared or unwilling to wade the estuary.
  96. Te Muri beach is currently accessed by park visitors on foot by wading across the Te Muri Stream, usually at low tide. Access via the stream limits access for many visitors to 2 hours either side of high tide.
  97. A number of submitters opposed the Te Muri bridge option, mainly on the basis that it is unnecessary and that having to cross the stream helps retain the sense of remoteness of
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the park and will help keep the number of visitors down. They also noted that there are a number of other parks accessible for those park users wanting easy access to a beach, such as Long Bay and Wenderholm.

98. The Te Muri Stream is identified in the PAUP as highly ecologically significant estuary. It has Outstanding Natural Landscape, High Natural Character (north bank) and is a Significant Ecological Area –Coastal 1 and is recognised as an Outstanding Natural Feature.
  99. There are also a number of sites on either side of the estuary that are identified as ‘Sites of Value to Mana Whenua’ and would need to be taken into consideration in any development proposal. Any structure within the estuary may require resource consent for a non-complying structure.
  100. It is recommended that the policies relating to pedestrian and cycle access be amended to allow for immediate access via Te Muri Stream, subject only to the provision of appropriate infrastructure and trails to facilitate these activities on the park. However, after hearing the evidence, access for horse riding still appears problematic as the Council (and mana whenua) does not support horses crossing streams and rivers. We were advised that this runs contrary to rules in the proposed Unitary Plan and is inconsistent with policies contained in the RPMP to protect riparian areas from the adverse impacts of stock. We do note however that grazing stock may not be as well controlled as a horse under the guidance of a rider. This issue may need further consideration through the forthcoming review of the Management Plan. Access for horses would have to be via bridges or via Hungry Creek Road. While it may be possible to allow horses to be ridden up Hungry Creek Road, in its current state it would not be desirable to allow horse floats to use Hungry Creek Road. Any use of Hungry Creek Road by horse riders will however require measures ensuring the safe crossing of SH1.
  101. It is recommended that the policies relating to horse riding at Te Muri be amended to allow horse riding on the park but only if and when appropriate and safe access can be provided. This may take the form of bridges across streams and rivers or safe ‘crossings’ of SH1 to allow riding up Hungry Creek Road. Crossing of SH1 may be in the form of managed traffic control or a physical underpass. However, the immediate use of Hungry Creek Road by horse floats is not recommended until the SH1 intersection and the road have been upgraded.
  102. Given the likely delay in gaining access to the park via Hungry Creek Road it may be desirable to develop, [as demand increases], additional parking on the northern side of Te Muri Stream in order to facilitate pedestrian access to Te Muri. This will be necessary whether or not a bridge is constructed and in the long term, provides access for those wishing to enjoy the Te Muri beach environment without having to walk the length of the park from Hungry Creek Road.
  103. In respect of the Pūhoi River, Mahurangi Action submitted that at the creation of an east–west coastal walking route (the Mahurangi Coastal Trail), supplemented by bridle, mountain-bike and other parallel and loop trails, is the best way to optimise the recreational potential of the park. They see that as creating the missing terrestrial Pūhoi–Te Muri section of Te Araroa trail, and argued that private vehicle access along the central ridge of the park to Te Muri beach is incompatible with this role.
  104. The Mahurangi Action proposal for the development of the Mahurangi Coastal Trail received significant support in the submissions noting that a Mahurangi Coastal Trail should be developed immediately as the initial means of providing public access to the new Te Muri parkland, and that access by private vehicle should only be considered in the event the trail is little used. We were referred to the Mahurangi Coastal Trail technical document which outlines the options that have been explored by Mahurangi Action and provides some detail on their preferred option of this trail being developed upstream in the vicinity of Schischka House on Wenderholm Regional Park.
  105. A significant number of submitters, including mana whenua, opposed the proposal for a bridge across the Pūhoi River. Most of the opposition relates to keeping Te Muri as a
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remote location with few visitors and the potential visual, environmental and cultural impacts of a bridge in this catchment.

106. We were advised that there are a number of issues that need to be considered in relation to constructing a bridge across the Pūhoi River. Those included issues relating to:
- demand for recreational access
  - resource management and regulatory requirements
  - build-ability, operational and maintenance issues
  - climate change and related sea level rise
  - river catchment conditions and flow dynamics, and
  - Council funding priorities.
107. The hearings report set out the details related to those issues and they are not repeated here.
108. Based on the evidence and information set out in the hearings report we recommend that any commitment to a bridge is delayed until the Te Muri and Hungry Creek Road access points have been implemented and the level of (and nature of) use of Te Muri is better known.
109. In order not to foreclose future investigations and options and without signaling any pre-determinism we recommend that the Management Plan includes a policy to explore further bridge options together with other options such as boat/ferry and land-based alternatives.

### **Boat access**

110. A number of alternative access options were suggested by various submitters. Those included provision for kayaking and other boating access, providing for public transport access, a water-taxi service from Wenderholm Regional Park, and for horse riders to utilise the “paper roads” in the vicinity of the park.
111. One submitter said that the Council had a unique opportunity to make the Park petrol/diesel engine free by offering a tender operation to ferry visitors from the Hungry Creek road car park to Te Muri Beach using battery driven electric vehicles.
112. Others sought the provision of a shuttle service from a car park right back at the entrance to the park to the campground so that families, in particular, could get all their kids and camp gear safely to the camping area. This could also be considered for the northern end of the park, Mahurangi East Road end.

### **Public Transport**

113. A number of submitters mentioned the ability to get to the park by public transport noting some public transport options could be provided since these are far less likely to lead to any pollution and other disturbances.

### Alternative parking area off SH1

114. A few submitters suggested building a parking area adjacent to SH1 and building a bike / horse riding / walking access track from that parking facility to and up Hungry Creek Road that will encourage visitors to visit both the Pūhoi Historic village and provide access to the Te Muri block. One submitter noted this would spread the visitors across the entire Park, provide tourism revenue for the Pūhoi Historic Village and support the Te Araroa pathway by providing an off road walking trail from Pūhoi to Wenderholm rather than encouraging more overcrowding with substandard infrastructure that may not cope on busy days.

### **SH1 crossing or underpass and links to Pūhoi Village**

115. Submitters suggested working with Auckland Transport and NZTA to create a crossing or
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underpass of SH1, suggesting this could be from Cook Road to Hungry Creek Rd for walkers, cycles, and horse riders from Pūhoi to Te Muri.

116. Public submissions drew attention to the potential to utilise a number of esplanade reserves, paper roads and existing public land (including land set aside for road construction purposes) to provide a local trail network. The Pūhoi Community Forum pointed to their desire to see the Pūhoi Village linked into a trail network in the district. They pointed to the increasingly popular Te Araroa National Trail, which traverses the area. These links have the potential to facilitate access to Te Muri Regional Park without the need for expensive bridges and road upgrades. These would also serve a number of community functions in the locality, such as links to public transport routes as well as recreational locations. While outside the scope of the variation, it is strongly recommended that the Council work with the land owners, mana whenua, the local community, the local board, Auckland Transport, NZTA, the Te Araroa Trust and interested stakeholders to promote and facilitate the development of a local trail network.

### **Greenways and paper roads**

117. Other submitters would like Regional Parks to work with Rodney Local Board, and the Greenways Plan to ensure that a network of trails (bridleways) allows for horse riders and others to enter the park on horseback if desired.
118. We note that it is already possible for kayakers and small hand-launched craft to access Te Muri Beach and to cross the Pūhoi River from Wenderholm. An all-tide wharf exists at Wenderholm and a small landing area on the northern banks of the Pūhoi River would help facilitate this but there would need to be a proven demand to justify the cost of such a facility.
119. In terms of public transport we were advised by the reporting officers that the evidence is that very few visitors use the bus services to Long Bay Regional Park which has a bus terminus located on the park.
120. The Pūhoi Community Forum and NZ Horse Network noted that there are a number of unformed legal roads (“paper roads”) linking Pūhoi village and a various pieces of publicly owned land (including NZTA land) in the vicinity and that they intersect with a number of the formed public roads, including Hungry Creek Road (Refer Attachment D map). These offer possible routes for trail systems, including equestrian trails. The use of “paper roads” would have to be approved by AT. The Council is currently developing “greenway plans” for the Rodney area. While these are currently focused on existing settlements such as Warkworth, the potential exists to investigate the use of “paper roads” in the Pūhoi-Mahurangi area as potential off-road trail links to the regional parks, including Te Muri.
121. We also note that the Pūhoi Community Forum suggested the option of providing a parking area on the western side of the SH1. This could link with the “paper road” network noted above but would necessitate safe crossing of the SH1. It is unknown at this stage what impact the new motorway will have on the volume of traffic using the old SH1. Options for a SH1 crossing could be explored further in consultation with AT once the actual level of use becomes clearer.

### **Natural Settings**

122. Only one submitter made a submission relating to pest control and opposing the use of 1080 to eradicate pests in Regional Parks.
123. We concur with the reporting officers where they note that the protection and enhancement of natural and endemic ecosystems and wildlife habitats is a primary function of regional parks, including extensive re-vegetation enhancement programmes.
124. The management of pest animal and plant species on regional parks is governed by the general policies in Section 10.4 of the RPMP 2010.
125. We generally agree that the use of poisons and pesticides on regional parks is currently a primary management tool where it is carried out within the standards and conditions for
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agrichemicals and vertebrate toxic agents set out in the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan.

126. Currently 1080 poison is a legal form of pest control. It is only used on parks if it is an appropriate form of control and in accordance with NZ Standards for the Management of Agrichemicals (NZS8409-2004) by operators qualified and accredited by GROWSAFE and AIRSAFE as specified in the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan.
127. We do note that the position of mana whenua signals a need to shift towards strategies that do not rely on the use of poisons or toxic substances no matter how well managed the use of them may be. We recommended that this matter be further investigated as part of the forthcoming overall review of the Regional Parks Management Plan.
128. There were a number of submissions that addressed fencing related matters. Mahurangi Action submitted that there is a need to protect and enhance the resilience of the dune system and that private vehicle access to the beach is incompatible with the 'duty' to nurture the beach, dune system and coastal terrace in the face of anthropogenic sea-level rise. There is also a need to manage foot traffic between the beach and the terrace to protect dune vegetation and minimise wind erosion.
129. The management of natural ecosystems and habitats are managed in terms of the general policies contained in Section 10.3 of the RPMP 2010. The fencing of wetlands, riparian areas and coastal forest ecosystems is to prevent stock from accessing these areas.
130. We also concur with the objective for Te Muri to re-vegetate at least 60 percent of the land in native and eco-sourced vegetation to restore the viability of the native ecosystems and habitats as far as possible. We agree with the officers recommendation to clarify the wording in the last bullet point on page 4 in section 17.24.3 *Management Focus* by replacing the words 're-vegetation' with the words 'undertaking a re-vegetation programme'.

#### **Other matters relating to natural settings**

131. Submitters noted Te Muri Beach fledges endangered dotterels every year and that this doesn't ever happen at nearby Sullivan's because the people pressure there is too great. They were concerned that the proposed car park will mean lots of people and in turn this will be another beach where people-pressure will stop these endangered birds from breeding.
  132. Submitters thought an interesting and useful development in Te Muri would be the establishment of an arboretum, ideally including a selection of exotic trees as well as showcasing native trees.
  133. One submitter suggested the thousands of dollars spent on infrastructure to create public access should perhaps be spent on a predator proof fence and re-vegetation programmes.
  134. Submitters suggested restoring/stabilising the foreshore dune system.
  135. In relation to the suggestion for the creation of a marine reserve off the coast of Te Muri we note that marine reserves are governed by the Marine Reserves Act [which is currently under review by the Minister of Conservation]. There is nothing in the management plan provisions for Te Muri that would prevent the consideration of a marine reserve at a future date if this proved desirable and met the criteria set out in the reviewed Marine Reserves Act or similar legislation.
  136. In response to the submitters and on balance, we concur with the officers advice and recommend adding a policy to the Natural Settings section as follows:

*'Protect wildlife habitats and roosting and nesting coastal birds from undue disturbance and, in particular, NZ dotterels and other endangered shorebirds during the nesting season.'*
  137. We also concur with (and recommend accordingly) their advice to delete Policy 5 as the issue of protecting the dunes and foreshore is covered in the new Te Muri Beach –Special Management Zone (SMZ) section.
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## Cultural and Historic Settings

138. One submitter questioned why the Māori Pā sites on the headlands overlooking Wenderholm are not indicated on the map.
139. Mahurangi Action (98) submitted that there is a need to consider the long-term resting place for the human remains and memorials currently contained in the sandpit urupā of Te Muri as a result of potential sea-level rise.
140. We concur with the reporting officer's advice that one of the primary roles of regional parks is to record, protect and interpret the cultural and historic settings contained within the parks and to tell the story of Auckland through them.
141. Part 10 and 11 of the RPMP 2010 sets out the general policies relating to the management of cultural sites on regional parks. The management of cultural sites at Te Muri falls within this framework.
142. We were advised that all known archaeological sites at Te Muri have been recorded and are shown on Map 24. Further archaeological surveys will be undertaken if necessary, especially as part of development projects to ensure development and/or revegetation projects do not impact on significant sites. Archaeological sites will be progressively fenced off from heavy stock and the track network will be designed, in consultation with mana whenua, to avoid or minimise the impacts on these locations.
143. We were told that there is no immediate threat from sea level rise for the cemetery but consideration will need to be given to this threat in the future in accordance with Council policy.
144. The pā sites on Wenderholm Regional Park were not included on the Te Muri maps as Wenderholm has its own set of policies and maps and those were not the subject of this variation to the RPMP 2010.
145. It was noted that Policy 12 refers to naming "a feature" of the park in acknowledgement of the *Schischka* family. We were advised that this is inconsistent with the agreement reached with the family at the time of purchase of the land. It is therefore recommended that the policy be amended to better reflect the wording of that agreement.
146. We agree with the officer's advice and recommend amending Policy 12 (renumbered as Policy 11) to read:

*'Acknowledge the Schischka family's historic ties to the land by naming a road or area on the park with a name associated with the Schischka family in consultation with the family.'*

## Farm Settings

147. A number of submissions related to continued farming operation and to maintaining a farm setting. There was both support and opposition to that.
  148. The officer's report noted that the farming operations on regional parks are governed by the general policies contained in Part 12 of the RPMP 2010.
  149. The re-vegetation of regional parks and the restoration of ecosystems and habitats is a primary role of regional parks and will be a major focus of the management of Te Muri.
  150. All archaeological sites will be fenced off and heavy stock will be removed from these locations. Recreational activity will be directed away from the sites and the track network will be designed, in consultation with mana whenua, to avoid or minimise the impact on archaeological sites.
  151. Farming regional parks provides an open space context for a number of open space recreational activities and it is the most efficient way to manage large tracks of pastoral open space while providing an economic return to the council. It protects open vistas for park visitors to enjoy - the panorama views across the Hauraki Gulf are a major feature of Te Muri - and the farming operations enable park visitors to experience Auckland's
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farming heritage in operation.

152. We agree with the officer's advice and recommend that Policy 13 (renumbered as Policy 12) be amended to read:

*'Continue to sustainably farm those portions of the park not devoted to re-vegetation and archaeological protection as open pasture acknowledging the parks rural heritage, and the need to retain key views and vistas, and facilitate recreation and use of the park (including farm experiences).'*

### **Woodlots**

153. Some submitters were for and against woodlot plantings.
154. Much of the opposition to woodlots appears to be based on the desire to "keep the park as it is".
155. The officer's report noted that woodlots, including native tree woodlots, on regional parks are governed by the policies contained in Section 12.4 of the RPMP 2010. Woodlots are not common on regional parks. Apart from the commercial forest in the Hunua Ranges, which is operated under licence by a private forester, most are small and are often for research purposes only. They also offer the opportunity for higher impact recreation, such as mountain biking that would not be appropriate in native forest.
156. We were told that there are currently three significant areas of existing exotic woodlots on Te Muri. These will need to be managed until they mature and can be harvested. At that point decisions must be made as to either replanting in harvestable trees or re-vegetating in native trees as part of the native habitat restoration programme.
157. We agree with the officer's advice and recommend:

*Deletion of the word 'exotic' before the word 'woodlots' from the 9<sup>th</sup> bullet on page 4 in Section 17.24.3 Management focus*

And,

Replace Policy 19 (which becomes Policy 18 due to deletions) relating to woodlots with the following:

*'At the time of the harvest of the existing woodlots, give consideration to replacement with exotic or native woodlots, or with native vegetation; taking into account the following:*

- a) market conditions for timber*
- b) operational needs, such as erosion control*
- c) recreational needs, and*
- d) conservation needs'.*

### **Recreation and Use Management**

158. Submitters stated that they cannot see how all options of walking, running, biking and horse riding can be accommodated as they all have very different needs. They proposed that a plan of keeping this a pristine piece of coastal land would limit access to walking and running only as those engaging in these pursuits are more likely to be in tune with the environmental issues and respect the environment.
159. It was noted that the beach is already accessible to walkers, runners, bikers and horse riders (though bikers need to carry their bikes across the estuary).
160. The proposed variation makes provision for up to 15 kilometres of tracks which will offer visitors a range of walking opportunities, including a number of loop routes.
161. We concur with the officer's advice and recommend that Policy 27 (renumbered as Policy 25) be amended as detailed at paragraph 187 below.
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## Horses

162. Issues raised by submitters included matters of access to the park and parking for horse-floats.
163. Specific evidence from the NZ Horse Network set out a range of relevant considerations as noted in the summary of evidence above. Other submitters opposed the option for horse riding in the Park including mana whenua.
164. The hearing report noted that Part 13.4.6 of the RPMP 2010 sets out the general policies for the management of recreational horse riding on regional parks. Horse riding at Te Muri falls within this framework. However, access for horse riding at Te Muri Regional Park is dependent on how, where and when safe access can be provided. There apparently are three primary options. These include:
- access via Hungry Creek Road
  - access via Ngarewa Drive and crossing the Te Muri Stream
  - access via future 'greenways'.
165. We were advised that the PAUP states:
- Any livestock access in the CMA for droving of stock or horse riding must ensure:*
- a. the droving does not occur in estuarine areas or areas of salt marsh or mangroves and no grazing of intertidal vegetation must be allowed to occur*
  - b. the stock must be moved along at all times and not left unattended*
  - c. horses must be kept under control at all times*
  - d. horses must not graze on intertidal vegetation*
  - e. horses must not be ridden or taken into bird breeding areas.*
166. Regular and uncontrolled horse riding in the vicinity of the estuary and beach would be contrary to those provisions (if the operative version of the Unitary Plan still includes them).
167. We were advised that currently horse riding is permitted on 11 regional parks. These are Ambury, Atiu Creek, Awhitu, Duder, Hunua Ranges, Muriwai, Te Arai, Te Rau Puriri, Waitakere Ranges (Pae o te Rangi), Whakanewha and Waitawa. Only two of these parks are located in the north of the region, although the opportunities for horse riding are likely to be increased at Te Arai in the future, these locations are some distance from the centroid of horse riding activity. The evidence of Ms. Dostine also questioned whether 11 was in fact correct given the actual limitations that exist with current access to those regional parks. While horse riding is also catered for in the north at Woodhill Forest and by a number of private providers, given the lack of opportunities on the north-east coast, it could in theory be desirable to be able to offer this opportunity at Te Muri.
168. However, whilst we have sympathy for the arguments put forward by NZ Horse Network and see some merit in the suggestions regarding potential use of the Mahurangi woolshed in particular, (we note that remains outside the scope of this variation), on balance and with the current uncertainties about providing safe and acceptable access for horse riders, it would not be prudent to allow for horse riding on the park until either Hungry Creek Road is upgraded or safe and appropriate alternative access is provided.
169. Following this upgrade or provision of alternate access, it is recommended that horse riding be initially accommodated as a discretionary activity only and through a permit process utilising the formed farm roads.
170. It is also recommended that regional parks work with the Rodney Local Board to establish a network of equestrian greenways in the vicinity of Te Muri and Pūhoi.
171. We concur on balance with the officer's advice and recommend replacing Policy 28 (which becomes Policy 26 due to deletions) with the following wording:
- 'Horse riding will be permitted on the park once Hungry Creek Road has been upgraded*
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*or safe and appropriate alternative access has been developed and will be managed as a discretionary activity until demand establishes a need to develop dedicated horse trails and facilities (when riding on dedicated trails will be managed as a controlled activity); taking into account restrictions that will apply to protect sites of value to mana whenua, sensitive historic heritage, archaeological sites, and ecological areas, by:*

- a) working with horse riding groups, mana whenua and other stakeholders to develop horse riding trails on the park utilising existing farm tracks and to develop a horse-float parking area near the Hungry Creek Road park entrance.*
- b) working with Rodney Local Board, AT and NZTA to investigate the creation of equestrian trails and a parking area on the western side of State Highway 1.'*

172. We also concur with the officer's advice and recommend amending Policy 39 Principal Relationships to read:

*'The council will work with the land owners, mana whenua, the local community, the local board, Auckland Transport, NZTA, the Te Araroa Trust and interested stakeholders to promote and facilitate the development of a local trail network connecting and facilitating access between Pūhoi village and adjacent Te Muri, Wenderholm and Mahurangi regional parks.'*

And we also recommend amending the 'Controlled activities' Section 17.24.5 relating to horse riding to add the following statement:

*'Recreational horse riding will not be permitted until Hungry Creek Road has been upgraded or safe and appropriate alternative access has been developed. Initially this will be managed as a discretionary activity until demand establishes a need to develop dedicated horse facilities, at which time it will be managed as a controlled activity on designated routes. Restrictions will apply to protect sites of value to mana whenua, sensitive historic heritage, archaeological sites and ecological areas.'*

## **Biking**

173. A range of variations on access for pedestrians and cyclists were described by submitters. Some submitters supported making bridges over Te Muri Stream and the Pūhoi River usable by cyclists. They also supported working with Auckland Transport and NZTA to create a crossing of SH1 from Cook Road to Hungry Creek Rd for walkers, cycles, and horse riders in order to connect Pūhoi Village to Te Muri Regional Park. Many submitters supported development of tracks that cater for cycling while others supported sharing bike tracks with horse riders.

174. The Auckland Mountain Bike Club as noted in the summary of evidence above, were concerned that only recreational cycling across paddocks and farm tracks may be catered for and they sought dedicated mountain biking tracks and accordingly sought changes to Policy 27 and Map 24 to reflect that. They sought amendment to Policy 27 to replace "as indicated in Map 24" with "with sufficient length of trail to ensure repeat visits as a mountain biking destination." They also sought amendment to Map 24 by removing and/or adding trails for mountain biking or an annotation as to where mountain biking trails are not appropriate.

175. Some submitters supported mountain biking provided they have a separate track network to walking tracks. Others supported biking but wanted horse riding given greater focus and funding. Some submitters sought exclusion of horses and cyclists from the beach itself.

176. We heard that many submitters supported bike access from Wenderholm, Mahurangi, Hungry Creek Road and/or from Pūhoi Village via a proposed new track that includes an underpass under SH1.

177. The majority of submitters supported the development of a biking track network that

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catered for walking and biking.

178. Recreational cycling in the RPMP refers to relatively easy cycling that is undertaken at a leisurely pace on poled routes over farmland and shared use tracks and roads or in a designated area. We were told by the officers that this is the type of cycling that is largely envisaged on the indicative track network shown on Map 24.
  179. There is a lack of longer (5km or longer) recreational biking tracks north of Shakespear Regional Park. Such tracks do however exist at Atiu Creek Regional Parks and are contemplated at Te Arai Regional Park. The indicative track network at Te Muri Regional Park would offer almost 15km of tracks but this could be extended in the future if connected to adjoining parks or to future greenways across private land. While demand may be initially low because of the above-mentioned access challenges, it will be important to progress the planning for the walking and recreational cycling track network in order to enable re-vegetation and fencing decisions on Te Muri that are likely to be made prior to the actual construction of the track network. Mountain biking in the RPMP refers to more difficult cycling on purpose built single and shared used tracks. These range from relatively flat, wide, smooth tracks to narrow tracks with steep slopes and difficult obstacles as are found in the Hunua Ranges and at Waitawa Regional Park.
  180. Auckland Mountain Bike Club contend that recreational biking alone is unlikely to offer quality, enriched experiences that will generate return trips and word of mouth recommendations. They think there is a significant opportunity to develop a destination mountain bike track network at Te Muri that would complement other opportunities in the Rodney Local Board area – including the existing tracks at Woodhill Forest and Riverhead Forest and those proposed at Weiti.
  181. If better access to the park is developed in accordance with the recommendations contained in the hearings report on access, then opportunities to develop a destination mountain bike track network could warrant further consideration. Taking this further, the Auckland Mountain Bike Club were asked to provide a suitable definition for “destination mountain biking” as set out previously in the summary of evidence presented at the hearing.
  182. Several submitters raised concerns about the impact of biking on the park’s environmental values. Mana whenua also noted concerns about the activity on sites of significance to them and to the environment. As noted in the Auckland Mountain Bike Club’s submission, mountain biking trails can be located, designed and constructed to avoid adverse effects on water quality, ecology, amenity, archaeological sites or agricultural activities. The indicative track network shown on Map 24 must go through a detailed planning stage that will consider these matters and involve mana whenua input prior to construction. The construction will then be in accordance with the generic infrastructure policies in chapter 14 of the Regional Parks Management Plan. These policies specifically address the avoidance or mitigation of adverse impacts on these park values.
  183. Given the number and extent of sites of value to mana whenua it is considered that it is not appropriate to provide for cycling over open pasture areas.
  184. The nature of ‘recreational cycling’ means that it generally raises fewer concerns for walkers sharing tracks than ‘mountain biking’. Measures set out in Policy 13.3.4.3 such as track design and developing one-way systems will be considered when the detailed planning is undertaken for any track network.
  185. Three submitters opposed motorbikes being permitted on the park. The proposed management plan provisions do not provide for this activity and in accordance with Policy 13.3.5.2 of the RPMP 2010, will be prohibited.
  186. Officers noted in their response that destination mountain biking will require track systems that are of a nature and extent not normally found on a regional park. They advise that they will need to be carefully located and designed by specialists. For this reason it is recommended that in making provision for Te Muri to become a mountain bike destination, it is subject to the development plan provisions set out in Section 7.3 of the RPMP. We concur with that advice and recommend accordingly.
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187. In relation to the above matters and based on the evidence we concur with the officer's advice and recommend the following changes:

- Delete original Policy 26 and amend Policy 25 as below to include access for biking.

*“Work with stakeholders and mana whenua to develop a walking and mountain biking track network, including where appropriate multi-use tracks, that provides a diverse range of experiences and challenge levels and sufficient length of trail to be a mountain biking destination. Such tracks shall be located and or designed to take into account potential conflicts with other track users, and avoid adverse effects on sites of value to mana whenua, sensitive historic heritage, archaeological sites and ecological areas.”*

- Add a new definition of a ‘destination mountain biking’ to read as follows:

*“Destination mountain biking areas are usually in areas where riders have to drive or travel to get to from their place of residence. They include basic amenities such as toilets and way finding signage, shared and dedicated mountain biking trails offering a range of trail difficulties and experiences with a minimum ‘ride time’ of 60 to 120 minutes, and a trail network with the ability to host cross-country, enduro, and cyclo-cross mountain biking events.”*

- Include a footnote on the same page as Policy 25 setting out the definition of destination mountain biking in line with the above.

- Add a footnote on the same page as Policy 25 that reads:

*‘Provision for Te Muri to become a mountain bike destination as set out in Policy 25 is subject to the development plan provisions set out in Section 7.3 of the RPMP 2010.’*

- Amend Policy 22 to include reference to making Hungry Creek Road safe for biking and pedestrians.

- Add a new policy to read:

*“Work with mountain bike interests and other stakeholders to develop a purpose-built mountain biking trail network.”*

- Amend the Permitted activities table under 17.24.5 Recreation and use activities to add ‘recreational cycling’ as well as mountain biking.

- Amend status/restrictions associated with this permitted activity to read:

*‘Permitted on designated tracks subject to restrictions to protect sites of value to mana whenua, sensitive historic heritage and archaeological sites, and ecological areas; or to enable park operations such as farming operations, track maintenance and pest control.’*

- Replace the term ‘mountain biking’ with ‘biking’ or ‘recreational cycling’ where appropriate throughout the document.

## **Te Araroa**

188. Many submitters noted their support to investigate the development of the central road to form the missing section of Te Araroa, the national walkway, between Pūhoi and Wenderholm connecting to the proposed Mahurangi Coastal Trail.

189. We note as did the officers in their report that Te Araroa - New Zealand's national trail - is a continuous 3,000 km walking track from Cape Reinga to Bluff. At the present time, the walking route from Pūhoi Village to Wenderholm Regional Park is incomplete. The only practical option is therefore to hire a kayak and on an outgoing tide make the downstream

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journey to Wenderholm Regional Park or use the public roads to access Wenderholm Regional Park.

190. The ability to realign Te Araroa through the park is dependent on the construction of a pedestrian bridge across the Pūhoi River, the development of a land-based route or options such as a water taxi to connect Te Muri Regional Park to Wenderholm Regional Park. Should either initiative proceed, the policy framework enables Council to work with the Te Araroa Trust and other stakeholders, such as Auckland Transport and the New Zealand Transport Authority, to investigate opportunities to develop a terrestrial link from the access point(s) to connect to the park trail network.

## **Camping**

191. One key issue was whether to enlarge the camp ground on Te Muri beach and/or pull it back from the beach frontage.
  192. Some submitters did not support the expansion of the camping area and others suggested not allowing camping on the front dunes, so as to preserve these. Other submitters commented specifically on retaining walk-in access with regard to camping/camp ground with submitters noting that Te Muri campground's current lack of cars makes for a safe campground for children and that campers feel safe away from the type of campers that vehicle access brings in.
  193. Submitters also specifically noted the extra effort and sense of adventure in getting to Te Muri is part of the unique experience and appeal of camping at Te Muri.
  194. They referred to Te Muri campground's quietness and sense of isolation/remoteness forming its character and appeal noting Te Muri strikes the perfect balance of being close to Auckland and very accessible to the public yet still feeling very secluded. Also, it is a very quiet, family orientated camp ground.
  195. A number of submitters specifically commented on caravans, campervans motorhomes or self-contained vehicle camping and the effects on the character of Te Muri.
  196. Some submitters supported access and further development to the park to allow them to ride and camp onsite overnight with their horses including provision for grazing.
  197. Other outcomes noted by submitters included allowing camping experiences that could be provided such as additional backcountry camps further back in the park to enable groups to progress from one camp to another in smaller groups and avoid crowding the beach side camp.
  198. Some suggested camping should be moved landward of the coastal terrace to allow for a picnicking zone and other camping areas should be developed on the Nokenoke terrace beside the estuary and on the airstrip by the park entrance which could service the Te Araroa walkers and horse riders.
  199. We note as did the reporting officers that camping on regional parks is governed by the general policies under Section 13.4.2 of the RPMP 2010.
  200. Camping at Te Muri beach has been officially permitted since about 1988 with foot access across the Te Muri Stream. Many submitters, including regular campers, noted that its relative remoteness and the fact that campers have to make the effort to walk to the campsite is part of the charm and uniqueness of camping at Te Muri. Many submitters also noted that the relative isolation and lack of vehicles make this a very safe and pleasant campsite for the young and elderly alike.
  201. In terms of additional camping the officers noted that the existing campground at Te Muri has capacity for 80 campers. The Council does not allow 'freedom' camping on regional parks. All camping sites must have, as a minimum, access to a water supply and toilets. They must also be located where sewage effluent disposal is practicable or a holding vault can be constructed. They must therefore be located so that they can be serviced either with electricity to drive effluent pumps or vehicles in order to pump out holding vaults. At this stage there is no demonstrated demand for additional capacity or alternative sites at
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Te Muri. However, Policy 14.4.3 on the RPMP 2010 makes provision for additional camping on regional parks should there be a demand. The implementation of this policy will be dependent on a development plan being prepared and consulted on in terms of Section 7.3 of the RPMP 2010. Alternatively, the demand for additional camping at Te Muri can be revisited when the RPMP comes up for review in 2020. We agree with that approach.

202. We concur with the officers recommendations to delete Policy 31 and add the following policies to the new Te Muri Beach SMZ section:

*xx) Maintain the campground behind Te Muri Beach and, if demand establishes a need, expand the capacity of the campground as a series of intimate enclaves while recognising the coastal buffer zone identified below. [44]*

*xx) Create a buffer zone to allow for dune stabilisation and keep it free of infrastructure except that designed to protect the dunes. [47]*

203. We also recommend the deletion of Policy 32 relating to 'glamping' and amendment to Policy 23e) to read:

*e) subject to future Hungry Creek Road improvements enabling the potential safe movement of horse floats and campervans, investigate the extent of stakeholder support for and viability of providing parking for horse floats and/or a small self-contained campervan campground.*

### **Bach escapes**

204. A number of submitters both supported and opposed the idea of 'bach escape' buildings.

205. As noted by the reporting officers the utilisation of existing houses on regional parks for 'kiwi-experience' bach holiday stays has become one of the main ways, in addition to camping, that people can stay on a regional park. These have proved very popular and have seen under-utilised assets put to fuller use. The use of existing park dwellings as baches is governed by Section 13.4.4 of the RPMP 2010.

206. We are advised that there is no intention to build new dwellings as baches at Te Muri. The policy is to utilise the existing dwellings that are not being used for operational uses, such as resident rangers and temporary accommodation for volunteers working on the park or dedicated for a relevant recreational use or educational purposes.

207. Consistent with the reporting officers recommendations we recommend that the following changes be made to the proposed variation text:

- Amend Section 17.24.2 'Park Vision' by replacing the words '*a kiwi bach escape*' with the words '*opportunities for kiwi bach escapes*' and add the word '*remote*' before the word '*camping*' and delete the word '*area*'.
- Add to the 5th bullet point on page 5 the words '*for operational, cultural, educational or bach experiences*' after the word '*houses*'.
- Amend Policy 31 relating to the use of the existing houses as baches by adding the words: '*educational and/or cultural*' after the words '*recreation-oriented*'.

### **Interpretation Methods**

208. A number of submitters addressed this aspect of regional parks. As noted by the reporting officers one of the primary roles of regional parks is to record, protect and interpret the cultural and historic settings contained within the parks and to tell the story of Auckland through them. Part 10 and 11 of the RPMP 2010 sets out the general policies relating to the management of cultural sites on regional parks. The management of cultural sites at Te Muri falls within this framework.

209. The number of relatively intact pa sites, the cemetery and the farming history at Te Muri

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lend themselves to the development of a heritage trail, which coupled with the interpretation of the natural features and wildlife, would offer the opportunity to run education programmes for school aged children from the park.

210. The Council has an active on-site interpretation programme on regional parks which will be developed further at Te Muri in consultation with mana whenua and other stakeholders with cultural, historic and natural features of Te Muri. Bi-lingual signs are frequently used on regional parks, especially in relation to cultural interpretation.
211. Interpretation is an important part of managing sensitive features and ecosystems on regional parks. Pamphlets and site specific interpretation will be developed at features of interest and especially features that require protection, such a shore nesting seabirds, such as NZ dotterel.
212. Following from the above and after having heard the evidence in particular from Ms Annmarie Farrell, we recommend that the following changes be made to the variation provisions:

- Delete the following statement contained in Section 17.7.1 Park Values to the Mahurangi Regional Park:

*“The sea captain, John Sullivan married Meremai Kaipuke and they settled at Sullivan’s Bay in the 1870’s. Their descendants farmed the land for nearly a century and built the historic Sullivan Homestead in 1875. Both Māori and Europeans are buried at the historic Te Muri cemetery (urupā) on the park. Scott Point, with the Georgian styled homestead built in 1877, was the location of thriving timber milling, boat building and firewood cutting industries and coastal trade.”*

and replace it with the following:

*‘The sea captain, John Sullivan, born in London in 1810, settled at Otarawao (Sullivan’s Bay) in 1844 and married Merehai Kaipaka, possibly of the family of Makoare Ponui. From 1842 till his death in 1883 he was the owner and skipper of a number of coastal trading ships. His descendants farmed the land for nearly a century and built the historic Sullivan Homestead in 1875. Scott Point, with the Georgian styled homestead built in 1877, was the location of thriving timber milling, boat building and firewood cutting industries and coastal trade.’*

Based on Jade River – a history of Mahurangi by Ron Locker

- Add the following sentence at the end of the first paragraph under Te Muri cultural significance section on Page 1:

*‘Both Māori and Europeans are buried at the historic urupā’.*

## **Education**

213. Some submitters noted the importance of educating visitors about protecting birdlife and nature and how to have a low impact footprint. Te Muri was seen to have potential to become a centre for environmental education.
214. Warkworth Area Forest and Bird noted the Park is ideally suited to educational opportunities, tramps and camps. They said facilities such as strategically placed open shelters as virtual classrooms would provide a place to focus the children and shelter from sun and rain thus providing schools with security in arranging events in our inclement weather.
215. We concur with the reporting officer’s and recommend that Policy 43 (renumbered as Policy 40) be amended to read:

*‘Continue to liaise with stakeholders, mana whenua and community groups to develop and improve recreational, educational and cultural opportunities on the park’.*

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## Visitor facilities

216. There were a range of views put forward on the appropriate nature and scale of facilities at Te Muri. Some submitted that not everywhere needs to be civilised and homogenised.
217. Some noted that they like the rudimentary facilities, which are just right for campers, although there is a case for upgraded, ecological toilets. Sun shelters for campers and visitors are provided at some regional parks in accordance with Policy 13.1.2.2 in Section 13.1.2 of the RPMP 2010. These can be considered on a case by case basis as the needs arise, for instance in parks with limited natural shade. They are not usually provided in remote locations or where adequate tree-canopy coverage is available. Others suggested installing recycling and waste bins.
218. Submitters also suggested providing shelters and information stations or signs on the park. Other submitters both opposed and supported a visitor centre on the park.
219. Visitor information takes a number of forms on regional parks. It includes published material, such as pamphlets, as well as onsite facilities, such as directional signs, warning signs, notice boards and interpretation panels. The policies in Section 13.2 of the RPMP 2010 outline the range of visitor information available on regional parks. Notice boards are the main means of introducing visitors to the park and are usually located at the main arrival points on the parks.
220. Visitor centres are only provided where there is a need to provide more assistance to visitors than can be provided by other means, such as notice boards. Visitor centres will usually require staff to service them. There are no plans to create a visitor centre at Te Muri or at Sullivan's Bay.
221. As noted in the officer's report the role of regional parks is to provide people access to natural settings with minimal development. The construction of infrastructure and facilities on regional parks is governed by the policies set out in Part 14 of the RPMP 2010. These policies ensure that development on the parks is only necessary to serve the informal recreation use of the park, such as toilets and water supply for visitors, or an activity specifically approved in the management plan for the park, such as arrival areas and campgrounds.
222. Visitor facilities, such as car parking and toilets should be kept to the minimum necessary to serve the number of park visitors but in some cases may be restricted in order to limit the number of visits to some locations. Car parking is usually located and distributed to minimise the visual impacts of parked vehicles on the park environment.
223. We were advised by the officers that the location and type of toilets will be reviewed when they require upgrading. Additional toilets will be considered at new arrival areas.
224. Council has successfully operated a 'rubbish free' policy on regional parks for over 20 years in which park visitors are encouraged to take their rubbish home with them and recycle it at home. The only exception to this is campgrounds where large numbers of people are staying for extended periods (up to two weeks) and where recycling bins can be provided.
225. We agree with the officer's recommendations that the general policies contained in the RPMP 2010 be relied upon at Te Muri for the provision of appropriate visitor infrastructure on the park.
226. Accordingly we recommend amendment to Policy 30 to read:

*"Install information hubs and way finding signs to orientate visitors and facilitate visitor access to the recreation destinations within the park, including the key views and vistas."*

## Dogs

227. There were a range of views concerning dog access to the park. Some submitters sought designated dog walking tracks and/or a designated off-leash area. Others supported a
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network of trails for all users including dogs provided they are under control.

228. We agree with the officers when they note in their report that opportunities for park visitors to bring dogs that are under the owner's control on to regional parks should be considered where this does not unduly compromise the park values, other approved activities and the visitor experience.
229. The reporting officers advised us that Policy 13.3.3.2 of the RPMP 2010 states that dogs will generally be excluded from the following areas:
- a) scenic reserves,
  - b) wetlands,
  - c) nesting, roosting, feeding and species recovery areas of threatened indigenous fauna,
  - d) designated sites, picnic areas, campgrounds, huts, residential lodges, baches and meeting rooms,
  - e) farm settings during lambing and calving, and
  - f) licenced areas.
230. Dog walking opportunities are currently provided on the 3km Cudlip Loop Track on Mahurangi Regional Park and on Wenderholm Regional Park on both the walking track to Waiwera estuary and Kokoru Bay and the farmed area adjoining the Pūhoi River north of the Schischka Campground access road up to the campground.
231. Dogs have historically been prohibited from Te Muri Beach because of the presence of nesting seabirds and the location of the campground. These two factors and the likelihood of increased picnicking along the foreshore are the main reasons for continuing the prohibition of dogs along the coastal edge of the park.
232. For the foreseeable future, we are advised that the only access to the park for dogs would be through Te Muri Stream. Given the high natural values in this area, which contains an extensive wetland, it is not considered appropriate to permit dog walking until such time as alternative public access to the park from either Wenderholm Regional Park or off Hungry Creek Road is developed.
233. Should either of these alternative public access points be developed, restricted dog walking opportunities on the proposed track network in the park hinterlands could be reconsidered in future reviews of the Regional Parks Management Plan.
234. We concur with the officer's advice to delete any references to dogs in 17.24.5 Permitted activities table and recommend that change be made.
235. We also adopt the reporting officer's advice, that the following words be added to the 'Prohibited activities table':
- 'Dogs are prohibited from Te Muri Regional Park as dog access is permitted at Wenderholm and on Cudlip Point on Mahurangi Regional Park. Note that dog control is subject to the Dog Control Act 1996 and is subject to change – refer to the Council website for current dog control bylaws.'*

### **Events and commercial activity**

236. Some submitters requested provision to hold horse riding events (clubs and groups) and others suggested investigating the potential for developing some commercial operations that include food, drink, toilets, and lodge and backpackers' accommodation, and Wi-Fi service, provided by suitable franchisee. That included establishment of a camp store.
237. Submissions also encouraged the provision of a shuttle service from the car park to the campground so that families, in particular, could get all their kids and camp gear safely to the camping area. This could be booked along with the camp site and covered by a small fee.
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238. As noted in the hearings report events and commercial activities on regional parks are governed by the general policies contained in Section 13.1.7 and 13.5 of the RPMP 2010 relating to discretionary activities. Each application for an event or commercial activity is assessed on a case by case basis and against the policies set out in Section 13.5. These policies are designed to ensure that the events or commercial activities are appropriate to the setting, do not interfere with the enjoyment of casual parks users and do not detrimentally impact on the park environment.
239. Given the weight of submissions that the relative remote ambience of Te Muri should be retained we concur with the reporting officers and some submitters that the idea of enabling 'glamping' would be inappropriate.
240. Proposals such as horse riding events, regatta festivals, food and beverage sales could be considered under the general Park policies as discretionary activities. However, ventures that result in permanent structures on the parks, such as lodges or back-packer accommodation, would have to be considered as part of a formal variation to the RPMP 2010 or be addressed as part of the forthcoming review of the Plan.
241. We agree with the officer's advice and recommend that Policy 32 relating to 'glamping' be deleted.

### **Orienteering**

242. One submitter stated that orienteering is recreational sport that combines a physical challenge with the mental challenges of navigation. The sport caters for all age groups.
243. The listing of orienteering as a permitted activity (17.24.5) was strongly supported as are the proposals for a multi-use track network and managing the park for a range of recreational activities.
244. As noted in the officer's report, orienteering and similar activities like rogaining are becoming increasingly popular; both as formal events and as informal recreation. As with the development of other orienteering courses on regional parks, we were advised that mana whenua will be involved in the development of an orienteering course to ensure that the course directs participants away from any sites of significance to mana whenua and that information provided to orienteers raises an awareness of and respect for these sites.
245. In accordance with Policy 13.3.2.3 of the RPMP 2010, any orienteering that involves more than 75 people is a discretionary activity, that is, any applicant will need to seek approval for the event and if approval is granted it can specify conditions to manage the impacts of the event.
246. Accordingly we concur with officer's advice and recommend that the following policy [30] be added to the '*Recreation and Use Management*' section:

*'Develop an orienteering course in consultation with interested parties, mana whenua and other relevant stakeholders.'*

### **Mana Whenua**

247. Manuhiri Kaitiaki Charitable Trust ('Ngāti Manuhiri') submitted a cultural values assessment describing their relationship to the land that is now Te Muri Regional Park. Refer to 'Cultural Values Assessment for Wenderholm, Te Muri and Mahurangi (West) Regional Parks'.
248. Nga Maunga Whakahii o Kaipara Development Trust ('Nga Maunga Whakahii') is recognised as the legal entity that governs the operations and management of Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara, and has responsibilities to uphold the cultural heritage and values of Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara. The iwi stated that it has a responsibility to maintain and protect the cultural landscape across its rohe and shared interest areas. Te Muri is part of Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara's historical association to the east coast area and they recognise Te Muri as a significant land mark of the east coast. Nga Maunga Whakahii proposed a Treaty partnership approach, a co-management between Auckland Council and the iwi of the area to ensure that cultural and historical interests are upheld in the future
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management of parklands, Mahurangi, Te Muri and Wenderholm.

249. We refer also to the submission by Mrs Van Kampen and Mr Peter Van Kampen Junior presented on behalf of Arapeta Hamilton, descendants of Ngāti Rongo ō Mahurangi and Ngā Uri ō Pomare II who requested specific recognition in the variation to the RPMP.
250. In their response the Council officers noted that “the historical connection of Ngāti Rongo ō Mahurangi is identified in Section 17.7.1 Park Values of the RPMP 2010. The protocol for the formal and ongoing engagement with mana whenua on regional parks is the same as the protocol for resource management issues. The appropriate contact organisations are identified in the iwi engagement protocols on the Auckland Council website. These are based on relevant treaty settlement agreements. As these may change from time to time, it is not normal practice to identify specific iwi in reserve management plans. In the case of Ngāti Rongo ō Mahurangi, the current protocols direct all engagement with Ngāti Rongo through Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara or Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whātua.”
251. They also had specific requests relating to the naming of the park, co-management of the urupā and the re-opening of the urupā for burials. In response Council officers noted that, “the naming of regional parks or features on regional parks is set out in Section 15.1 of the RPMP 2010 and that the prerogative to name the park rests with the Council and the Council may, if it is deemed appropriate, call for public submissions on a name. In the case of Te Muri, Council named the park at the time of purchase.”
252. In terms of the request for the urupā to be reopened for burials, officers responded that, “the urupā at Te Muri is part of a closed cemetery. There is no intention to re-open the cemetery. Any request to do so would have to be directed through the Ministry of Health who administer the Burial and Cremation Act 1964.”
253. We concur with the officers’ advice and make no findings to the extent that the matters set out above are outside the scope of this hearing.
254. There were a range of submissions concerning engagement with and the role of mana whenua. The reporting officers noted that engagement with mana whenua is a Treaty of Waitangi obligation for Council. Part 9 of the RPMP 2010 sets out the Council’s commitment to tangata whenua with respect to the development and management of regional parks. The development and management of Te Muri falls within these obligations. While these policies do not provide for co-management they do strongly point to the involvement of mana whenua and the decisions on management of cultural features and associations at Te Muri. This does not preclude engagement with other parties with an interest in the future of Te Muri and especially those with an historic association with the property, such as the immediate and wider Schischka family.
255. Both Nga Maunga Whakahii and Ngāti Manuhiri have drawn attention to the fact that there is a traditional ‘Whale Urupā’ located on the site. We agree with the officers recommendation to add the following policy to the new Te Muri Beach SMZ section:
- ‘Maintain the integrity of the whale urupā free from structures and activity likely to have a detrimental impact on it.’*
256. We also note that mana whenua provided a range of views regarding their position on a number of matters raised both by them and other parties through the consultation and formal submission process as follows:
- Hungry Creek Road & vehicle access*
257. In their original submission, Nga Maunga Whakahii noted that they were not provided with detailed information and impacts assessments on the Hungry Creek Road access from SH1 to be able to make an informed response. At a subsequent hui with the Council, both Ngāti Manuhiri and Nga Maunga Whakahii recorded their support for the creation of an arrival area at the start of the park off the end of Hungry Creek Road, subject to the upgrade of Hungry Creek Road, but would not support parking vehicles further into the park (and by inference the arrival area behind the Te Muri beach.)
258. Neither Nga Maunga Whakahii nor Ngāti Manuhiri supported public vehicle access across
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or through Te Muri with Ngāti Manuhiri stating that vehicle access to Te Muri from SH1 should be restricted to Council staff, contractors and light vehicles (no buses or recreational vehicles).

#### *Crossing Te Muri Stream or Pūhoi river*

259. In relation to the option for a pedestrian walk bridge between Mahurangi and Te Muri, Nga Maunga Whakahii submitted that this option is supported in principle to encourage the public to hikoi - walk the experience. Ngāti Manuhiri also supported the retention of foot access to Te Muri via Te Muri o Tarariki Stream but suggested designing crossings that are fit for purpose and prevent damage to the streambed. For that same reason, the proposal to construct a pedestrian bridge over the Te Muri Stream was supported by Ngāti Manuhiri as an option if visitor pressure is having an obvious adverse effect on the stream bed on the basis that continued and increased foot traffic across the stream may be more detrimental than building a bridge and a bridge would take this level of ongoing disturbance out of the stream bed. They, however, point out the need to protect the number of archaeological sites in the vicinity which will require careful consideration in the placement of any bridge. They also suggested this should not be developed until there was a proven demand for this.
260. Neither Nga Maunga Whakahii nor Ngāti Manuhiri support any form of access option from Te Muri to Wenderholm with Ngāti Manuhiri stating specifically that it opposes any further crossing of the Pūhoi River and as such doesn't support Te Araroa being realigned through the park unless an alternative option to cross the river is available.

#### *Natural Settings*

261. Nga Maunga Whakahii point to the need to retain and enhance the ecological habitats of the native vegetation and all living species across Te Muri and neighbouring parklands to contribute to the natural green corridors. Ngāti Manuhiri also support the establishment and enhancement of ecological corridors with a full assessment of all current native biodiversity within the park as a baseline measure for the health and capacity of various habitats and to inform future monitoring.
262. Nga Maunga Whakahii acknowledged the steep gullies across Te Muri which require revegetation to minimise erosion. To that extent native revegetation planting is endorsed and the use of exotic plants is not supported. They understand that the use of exotic plants may be required in the short term to achieve the growth of native vegetation but consider this approach should be monitored to ensure the exotic will not become the primary plants (overtime will be removed) and that planting of native plants on Te Muri mirrors Maungatahoro on the Wenderholm parklands. They suggested the development of a plan for the removal of all exotic trees within an achievable timeframe.
263. Similarly, Ngāti Manuhiri endorses protection and enhancement of riparian margins and the re-vegetation programme. They have expressed a wish to see the exotic plantations replaced with native vegetation and that stock be kept out of the riparian areas along the streams and rivers.

#### *Pest Control*

264. Nga Maunga Whakahii noted its support for any proposed pest and weed management programmes to maintain and enhance the proposed revegetation of native trees, pointing also to the need to adopt a zero risk to the Kauri grove on Te Muri from Kauri dieback and the Kauri trees sighted from the Hungry Creek Road access way on Te Muri. Ngāti Manuhiri also pointed to the need to identify locations of Kauri and take measures to prevent the spread of Kauri Dieback disease by vehicle, cyclists and/or pedestrians. They advocated for removal, eradication or control of exotic plants and animals that are damaging, destroying or competing with native species, or their ecosystems and recommended a programme of long-term monitoring/recovery of local biodiversity in bush and streams is resourced and implemented. They also advocated for the avoidance of using chemical sprays, poisons and treatments as a means of weed and pest control where possible and practicable with preference for manual or alternative means.
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### *Cultural and Historic Settings*

265. Nga Maunga Whakahii and Ngāti Manuhiri both stated their concern that sites of cultural and historical value are protected. Ngāti Manuhiri specifically advocated for:

- “Protection of cultural landscapes and individual sites from unnecessary disturbance especially on ridgelines and features associated with Mana Whenua tupuna/ancestors.
- Early consultation with Manuhiri Kaitiaki Charitable Trust with regard to archaeological sites, waahi tapu, sights of significance and taonga whether recorded or not, and the use of accidental discovery protocols and cultural monitoring in high risk areas for any ground disturbing works.
- Support for a cultural landscape assessment, on-going programme of protection and monitoring of archaeological and other heritage sites, including auditing of existing recorded sites, their locations, conditions and risks.
- Exclusion of all stock including horses from all cultural or waahi tapu sites.
- Planting and heritage management plans are cross referenced to a) ensure vegetation does not impact archaeological sites and b) to capitalise on opportunities for careful selective planting as an interpretation mechanism on heritage sites.”

### *Equestrian*

266. Ngāti Manuhiri do not support horse trails or camping with horse floats as their main concern is for the protection of archaeological sites which could be disturbed/damaged if horse riders explore off track and over open spaces. Nga Maunga Whakahii does not support horse riding across Te Muri or in the waterways or streams, including the beach front of Te Muri.

### *Cycling*

267. While Ngāti Manuhiri didn't voice a position on cycling per se, they recommended a thorough cultural landscape assessment and early involvement in the design of any new infrastructure. They also noted the need to have a representative on site to monitor any developments in high risk areas; that is areas with a high probability of locating archaeological materials or near waahi tapu or taonga. Nga Maunga Whakahii does not support mountain biking on Te Muri.

### *Other infrastructure*

268. Nga Maunga Whakahii supports utilisation of the existing facilities for operational and maintenance purposes noting support also for the existing accommodations/baches to be utilised as a community facility or a visitors centre to drop in and seek information including interactive mediums on the cultural, historical and environmental features of the broader parklands: Mahurangi, Wenderholm and Te Muri.

269. Ngāti Manuhiri preferred that farming cease altogether or the number of grazing animals be minimised. They also advocated retiring steep, eroding or poor growing pasture and regenerating with natural bush, and the exclusion of stock, including horses from all cultural or wahi tapu sites.

270. Ngāti Manuhiri supported pulling back the campground and toilets from the beach and noted that as there are already dedicated campervan sites at Mahurangi, this should take pressure off having to provide this on Te Muri.

271. Ngāti Manuhiri advocated a number of opportunities for future engagement of mana whenua including the use of mana whenua place names for and within the Park and bi-lingual signage throughout the park. They noted the opportunity for Council to work with mana whenua in the future to develop a cultural trail including the incorporation of markers (poles) with Ngāti Manuhiri's logo signalling the different tracks across Wenderholm, Te

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Muri and Mahurangi Regional Parks (similar to the markers being installed at Tawharanui Regional Park) and also suggested the potential for direct involvement and resourcing of Ngāti Manuhiri in design and interpretation opportunities through pou, art, design elements, signage or other interpretive means of reflecting Ngāti Manuhiri's cultural footprint. They were supportive of education and partnership with the public with regard to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and submitted that Ngāti Manuhiri are contracted to maintain cultural sites (pa, midden, terraces etc.).

272. While mana whenua didn't raise any matters specifically related to orienteering, their comments related to directing pedestrians and other recreational activities away from their sites of significance and managing the impact of these activities on sites with high natural values is relevant to orienteering.
273. We have made a number of recommendations under each of the key issues that recognise the views of mana whenua as summarised above. Following from the submissions and evidence we recommend adding the words '*mana whenua*' where appropriate to policies throughout the document that refer to involvement with stakeholders or interest groups.

### **Relationships with Stakeholders**

274. A range of submissions addressed the role of stakeholders.
275. It was noted that the many people in the local community regularly volunteer at Mahurangi Regional Park to help with planting and clearing trap lines and that it is locals who gather litter and report dogs on Te Muri Beach.
276. Others mentioned volunteer groups are a major contributor to the Regional Park in donating their time as volunteer hours and their expertise; they deserve to be treated as stakeholders in a true partnership. We were told that volunteers are passionate about their parks and are the best representatives of the public and the ratepayers-volunteer partnerships are essential.
277. We note that the Council acknowledged the significant role that volunteers and other stakeholders play in developing, managing and activating regional parks and in particular the environmental stewardship role that the local community has played to date at Mahurangi Regional Park.
278. We concur with the recommendations from the reporting officers to amend Policy 41 (renumbered as Policy 37) to include the words '*planning policies and rules*' after the word '*bylaws*'. We also recommend amending Policy 43 (renumbered as Policy 38) by adding the words '*mana whenua*' after 'stakeholders' and the words '*education and cultural*' after 'recreation'. We also recommend amending Policy 45 (renumbered as Policy 41) by replacing the word '*Establish*' with the words '*Maintain and expand*'.

### **Summary of Findings**

279. It is clear that the majority of submitters favour retaining the relative remoteness of Te Muri Beach. However, most submitters also supported greater recreational access for walkers, mountain bikers and horse riders.
280. We concur with the reporting officers that providing increased public access to Te Muri, apart from the current access across the Te Muri Stream, is problematic. Most options involving upgrading of roads and/or the building of bridges are likely to be costly and some potentially have significant (adverse) environmental impacts.
281. While we were told that the Council did, in principle, support the concept of the 'Mahurangi Coastal Trail' its implementation depends on the construction of the footbridge across the Pūhoi River or the creation of land-based routes or the implementation of a ferry or water taxis to facilitate crossing of the Pūhoi River. It is noted that both iwi groups opposed the crossing of the Pūhoi River. The upgrading of Hungry Creek Road is likely to be difficult and because this work is dependent on another agency the timing is uncertain. Similarly, the upgrading of the central park road, which is 3.5 kilometres long, would be costly and
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will pose some environmental, engineering and traffic management challenges given its alignment along a narrow ridge.

282. There is strong opposition to upgrading the central road on the basis that [increased] vehicle traffic would compromise the quality of visitor experience on the park.
283. Neither of the above options can realistically be implemented until the SH1 realignment has been completed in 2022 (if on target) and the appropriate improvement made to the intersection with the old SH1.
284. While a range of access options exist including a bridge over the Pūhoi River, it is recommended that the Council continue to provide public access to Te Muri from Ngarewa Drive until the other access option(s) have been more fully examined and consulted around.
285. This would provide an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the level and types of recreational activity that can be accommodated at Te Muri and would not commit the Council to any options which on closer examination prove to be either uneconomic and/or undesirable for a range of effects related reasons.
286. The review of the Regional Parks Management Plan 2010 is due in 2020. This will provide the opportunity to further test the desirability of any access options. In the interim the development of a track network and other recreation, conservation and visitor programmes can continue on the park.
287. We conclude and recommend accordingly, that any decision on a bridge over the Pūhoi River should be delayed until any Te Muri and Hungry Creek Road access points are established and the level of use of Te Muri is better known-in terms of volumes, nature of uses and responses to the natural character of the park environment. That does not preclude future opportunities for exploring the bridge option further together with other options such as boat, ferry and alternative land-based options.
288. While outside the scope of the variation, it is also strongly recommended that the Council work with the land owners, mana whenua, the local community, the local board, Auckland Transport, NZTA, the Te Araroa Trust and interested stakeholders to promote and facilitate the development of a local trail network including the Te Araroa National Trail.

**Based on the submissions and supporting evidence we recommend that the proposed variations be approved subject to the amendment as set out in Attachment 1.**

**Barry Kaye**



**Chairperson**

**16 November 2016**

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# ATTACHMENT 1

## Summary of Hearing Panel Recommendations

Note all recommended changes refer to the variation provisions as amended in the officer's hearings report except where otherwise set out below.

### Mana whenua

<b>Issue raised by</b>	Commissioners
<b>Change requested</b>	Consistency of mana whenua acknowledgment throughout the variation.
<b>Rationale</b>	Acknowledgement of mana whenua as key stakeholders is absent in various places in the variation policies where consultation is proposed or required.
<b>Comment</b>	<p>This appears to be an editing issue given the following staff comments and recommendations on page 69 of the Hearing Agenda Report that state:</p> <p><b>Staff comments</b> - <i>“Engagement with mana whenua is a Treaty of Waitangi obligation for council. Part 9 of the RPMP 2010 sets out the council’s commitment to tangata whenua with respect to the development and management of regional parks. The development and management of Te Muri falls within these obligations. While these policies do not provide for co-management they do strongly point to the involvement of mana whenua and the decisions on management of cultural features and associations at Te Muri.”</i></p> <p><b>Staff recommendation</b> - <i>Add the words ‘mana whenua’ where appropriate to policies throughout the document that refer to involvement with stakeholders, such as the 11th bullet on page 4.</i></p>
<b>Current policy/wording</b>	The words mana whenua are absent in various places in the draft policies where consultation or involvement with stakeholders is proposed or required.
<b>Recommendation</b>	Add the words ‘mana whenua’ where appropriate to policies throughout the document that refer to involvement with stakeholders.

### Recreation and Use Management

<b>Issue raised by</b>	Auckland Mountain Bike Club
<b>Change requested</b>	Amendment to policy 25 to remove the words – ‘as indicated on map 24’; and include the words ‘and sufficient length of trail to be a mountain biking destination.’
<b>Request Rationale</b>	To ensure tracks and trails are located in the most appropriate locations and not restricted to pre-defined alignments proposed on Map 24. To ensure the trail network is of sufficient scale and quality to attract return visits from users from across the region. To ensure there is sufficient certainty to allow Te Muri to be developed as a mountain bike destination and to allow other stakeholders and the public to comment on the final proposal.

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<p><b>Comments</b></p>	<p>The decision to make Te Muri a mountain biking destination, as opposed to a park where people can ride their mountain bikes, is a new direction.</p> <p>The Auckland Mountain Bike Club has defined a mountain biking destination as:</p> <p><i>“Destination mountain biking areas are usually in rural, remote or scenic areas where riders have to drive or travel to get to. In Auckland, destination mountain biking is most likely, although not exclusively, in designated rurally located Regional Parks. With the need to travel to destination mountain biking areas, the rider should be rewarded with: basic amenities appropriate for the intrinsic values of the area, shared and dedicated mountain biking trails offering a range of trail difficulties and experiences, a minimum ‘ride time’ of 60 to 120 minutes, and a trail network with the ability to host cross-country, enduro, and cyclo-cross mountain biking events.”</i></p> <p>This will require track systems that are of a nature and extent not normally found on a regional park. They will need to be carefully located and designed by specialists. As any final layout cannot be determined at this stage, it is important that other stakeholders and the public have the opportunity to comment on the proposals. For this reason it is recommended that in making provision for Te Muri to become a mountain bike destination, it is subject to the development plan provisions set out in Section 7.3 of the RPMP 2010.</p>
<p><b>Current policy/wording</b></p>	<p><i>Policy 25</i></p> <p><i>‘Work with stakeholders and mana whenua to develop a walking and recreational biking track network that provides a range of experiences as indicated on Map 24.’</i></p> <p><i>Policy 26</i></p> <p><i>‘Once Hungry Creek Road is upgraded and demand establishes a need, work with mountain bike interests and other stakeholders to develop a purpose-built mountain biking trail network.’</i></p>
<p><b>Recommendation</b></p>	<p>Delete Policy 26 and replace the existing wording in policy 25 with the following:</p> <p><i>‘Work with stakeholders and mana whenua to develop a walking and mountain biking track network, including where appropriate multi-use tracks, that provides a diverse range of experiences and challenge levels and sufficient length of trail to be a mountain biking destination. Such tracks shall be located and or designed to take into account potential conflicts with other track users, and avoid adverse effects on sites of value to mana whenua, sensitive historic heritage, archaeological sites and ecological areas.’</i></p> <p>Include a footnote on the same page as policy 25 defining destination mountain biking that reads:</p> <p><i>‘Destination mountain biking areas are usually in areas where riders have to drive or travel to get to from their place of residence. They include basic amenities such as toilets and way finding signage, shared and dedicated mountain biking trails offering a range of trail difficulties and experiences with a minimum ‘ride time’ of 60 to 120 minutes, and a trail network with the ability to host cross-country, enduro, and cyclo-cross mountain biking events.’</i></p>

	<p>Include a footnote on the same page as policy 25 that reads:</p> <p><i>'Provision for Te Muri to become a mountain bike destination as set out in policy 25 is subject to the development plan provisions set out in Section 7.3 of the RPMP 2010.'</i></p>
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### Camping in the controlled activities table

<b>Issue raised by</b>	Various submitters and Commissioners
<b>Change requested</b>	In the controlled activity table, remove reference to self-contained campground opportunities becoming available once access <b>through the park</b> has been improved.
<b>Rationale for change</b>	Currently the controlled activity table implies access through the park will be improved in the future. This contradicts policies in the amended draft where the proposal to upgrade central road to provide public vehicle access through the park has been removed.
<b>Comment</b>	<p>In light of the reporting officers' advice and their recommendations on page 56 of the Hearing Agenda report this issue appears to be an editing error as the report recommends deletion of policy 22 in the draft variation that reads:</p> <p><i>"as resources permit and subject to hungry creek road and the intersection with the State Highway being improved, upgrade the central park road."</i></p>
<b>Current policy/wording</b>	<p><b>Controlled activity table (Description of Site column)-</b></p> <p><i>'Self-contained campground opportunities may become available once access to and through the park has been improved.'</i></p>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<p>Amend the controlled activity table relating to Campervans and Caravans by removing the words <i>'and through'</i> adding the word <i>'safe'</i> and replacing the word <i>'improved'</i> with <i>'achieved'</i> in the site description column to read:</p> <p><i>'Self-contained campground opportunities may become available once safe access to the park has been achieved.'</i></p>

### Access

<b>Issue raised by</b>	Auckland Mountain Bike Club, NZ Horse Network, Mahurangi Action.
<b>Change requested</b>	<p>Remove reliance on the upgrade of Hungry Creek Road to trigger:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening access to the park from the Hungry Creek Road.</li> <li>• Initiating future investigation into recreational facility development (e.g. mountain bike, horse riding and pedestrian trails, Pūhoi River crossing)</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale for change</b>	<p>These factors are outside the immediate influence of the council, it is not reasonable to restrict the public's use of Te Muri to this constraint when alternative access is available by way of a crossing of the Te Muri Stream and may be made available across the Pūhoi River or via land routes from Pūhoi Village.</p> <p>Initiating investigation of the possible alternative access options or development of park recreational infrastructure should not be reliant</p>

	on or delayed until Hungry Creek Road is upgraded.
<b>Comment</b>	<p>The Draft Variation linked the timing and staging of access to Te Muri Regional Park for activities such as walkers, cyclists and horse riding to the upgrade of Hungry Creek Road and the improvements to the intersection with State Highway 1 (SH1). The Draft noted that these upgrades would be unlikely to happen prior to the new motorway being completed in 2022 and that Auckland Transport did not see these works as a priority. Such works may therefore be several years away or until there is a proven demand as a result of greater activity on Hungry Creek Road.</p> <p>It is recommended that the policies relating to pedestrian and cycle access be amended to allow for immediate access via Te Muri Stream, subject only to the provision of appropriate infrastructure and trails to facilitate these activities on the park. However, access for horse riding remains problematic. The council does not support horses crossing streams and rivers. This runs contrary to rules in the proposed Unitary Plan and is inconsistent with policies contained in the RPMP to protect riparian areas for the adverse impacts of stock. Access for horses should preferably be via bridges or via Hungry Creek Road. While it may be possible to allow horses to be ridden up Hungry Creek Road, in its current state it would not be desirable to allow horse floats to use Hungry Creek Road. The use of Hungry Creek Road by horse riders will however require provision for safe crossing of SH1.</p> <p>It is recommended that the policies relating to horse riding at Te Muri be amended to allow horse riding on the park if and when appropriate and safe access can be provided. This may take the form of bridges across streams and rivers or safe crossings of SH1 to allow riding up Hungry Creek Road. Crossing of SH1 may be in the form of managed traffic control or a physical underpass. However, the use of Hungry Creek Road by horse floats is not recommended until the SH 1 intersection and the road have been upgraded.</p>
<b>Current policy/wording</b>	<p>Policy 21</p> <p><i>'Park visitors will be actively discouraged from using Hungry Creek Road access to the park and council work with neighbours and Auckland Transport (AT) on any on-going behavioural issues until such time as Hungry Creek Road is upgraded.'</i></p> <p>Policy 24</p> <p><i>'Once the Te Muri and Hungry Creek Road access points are operational and if there is proven demand, investigate additional means of providing pedestrian, cycle and horse access between Wenderholm, Pūhoi Village and Te Muri including boat access, land-based routes or bridge crossings. Investigations will need to take account of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a) demand for recreational access</i></li> <li><i>b) resource management and regulatory requirements</i></li> <li><i>c) build-ability, operational and maintenance issues</i></li> <li><i>d) climate change and related sea level rise</i></li> <li><i>e) river catchment conditions and flow dynamics, and</i></li> <li><i>f) Council funding priorities.'</i></li> </ul>

	<p>Policy 26</p> <p><i>'Once Hungry Creek Road is upgraded and demand establishes a need, work with mountain bike interests and other stakeholders to develop a purpose-built mountain biking trail network.'</i></p> <p>Policy 27</p> <p><i>'Horse riding will be permitted on the park once Hungry Creek Road has been upgraded and will be managed as a discretionary activity until demand establishes a need to develop dedicated horse trails and facilities; taking into account restrictions that will apply to protect sites of value to mana whenua and ecological areas by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a) working with horse riding groups and other stakeholders to develop horse riding trails on the park utilising existing farm tracks and to develop a horse-float parking area near the Hungry Creek Road park entrance.</i></li> <li><i>b) working with Rodney Local Board, AT and NZTA to investigate the creation of equestrian greenway trails and a parking area on the western side of State Highway 1.'</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendation</b></p>	<p>Amend S17.24.3 Management Focus by removing the following words in the first sentence of the second paragraph:  <i>'Similarly, once the Te Muri and Hungry Creek Road access points are operational and there is proven need for additional access.'</i> So that it reads;</p> <p><i>"Investigations will be undertaken to provide pedestrian, cycle and potentially horse access between Wenderholm, Mahurangi, Pūhoi Village and Te Muri. This may include boat access, land-based routes or a Pūhoi River bridge crossing to form part of a Mahurangi Coastal Trail".</i></p> <p>Amend the five year management priorities by adding the following bullet point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>investigating the feasibility of providing for additional access to Te Muri by way of boat/ferry access, land-based routes and/or bridge crossings</i></li> </ul> <p>Amend Policy 21 to read;</p> <p><i>'Park visitors will be actively discouraged from using Hungry Creek Road as vehicular access to the park until it has been made safe for vehicular access and the Council will work with neighbours and Auckland Transport (AT) on any ongoing behavioural issues in the meantime.'</i></p> <p>Amend Policy 24 so that it reads as follows;</p> <p><i>Investigate additional means of providing pedestrian, cycle and horse access between Wenderholm, Mahurangi, Pūhoi Village and Te Muri including boat/ferry access, land-based routes and bridge crossings. Investigations will need to take account of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a) demand for recreational access</i></li> <li><i>b) resource management and regulatory requirements</i></li> <li><i>c) build-ability, operational and maintenance issues</i></li> <li><i>d) climate change and related sea level rise</i></li> <li><i>e) river catchment conditions and flow dynamics, and</i></li> <li><i>f) Council funding priorities.</i></li> </ul>

	<p>Amend Policy 27 (which becomes Policy 26 due to deletion) by adding the words <i>'safe and appropriate access has been established'</i> so that the Policy reads as follows;</p> <p><i>"Horse riding will be permitted on the park once Hungry Creek Road has been upgraded or safe and appropriate alternative access has been established and will be managed as a discretionary activity until demand establishes a need to develop dedicated horse trails and facilities; taking into account restrictions that will apply to protect sites of value to mana whenua, sensitive historic heritage, archaeological sites and ecological areas by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a) working with horse riding groups, mana whenua and other stakeholders to develop horse riding trails on the park utilising existing farm tracks and to develop a horse-float parking area near the Hungry Creek Road park entrance.</i></li> <li><i>b) working with Rodney Local Board, AT and NZTA to investigate the creation of equestrian trails and a parking area on the western side of State Highway 1".</i></li> </ul> <p>Amend the controlled activity table relating to camping by deleting the words <i>'vehicle based camping may become available once road access is improved.'</i></p> <p>Amend the controlled activity table relating to recreational horse riding by adding the words <i>'or safe and appropriate alternative access has been developed'</i> at the end of the first sentence after the word upgraded.</p>
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## General

<b>Issue raised by</b>	Commissioners
<b>Change requested</b>	Amend spelling and grammatical errors throughout the variation document and ensure consistency of use of macrons on Māori terms.
<b>Rationale</b>	Various spelling, grammatical errors and inconsistent use of macrons throughout draft variation document.
<b>Current policy/wording</b>	Various errors.
<b>Recommendation</b>	Review and amend all spelling and grammar errors throughout the final Te Muri variation section of the Regional Parks Management Plan 2010 including amendments to the spelling of Māori words to include appropriate macrons.

## Linkages

<b>Issue raised by</b>	Pūhoi Community Forum and Pūhoi Canoes
<b>Change requested</b>	Opportunity to link to Pūhoi Village and adjacent regional parks.
<b>Rationale</b>	There is a potential to utilise a number of esplanade reserves, paper roads and existing public land (including land set aside for road construction purposes) to provide a local trail network linking the Pūhoi Village and Te Muri, Mahurangi and Wenderholm Regional

	Parks. Also providing connection for the Te Araroa Trail that traverses the area.
<b>Comment</b>	These links have the potential to facilitate access to Te Muri Regional Park without the need for expensive bridges and road upgrades. These would also serve a number of community functions in the locality, such as links to public transport routes as well as recreational locations. While outside the scope of the variation, it is recommended that the council work with the land owners, mana whenua, the local community, the local board, Auckland Transport, NZTA, the Te Araroa Trust and interested stakeholders to promote and facilitate the development of a local trail network.
<b>Current policy/wording</b>	Policy 39 <i>Work with Rodney Local Board, AT and the NZTA on matters relating to improving access to the park.</i>
<b>Recommendation</b>	Replace Policy 39 (renumbered as Policy 38) with the following: <i>‘The Council will work with the land owners, mana whenua, the local community, the local board, Auckland Transport, NZTA, the Te Araroa Trust and interested stakeholders to promote and facilitate the development of a local trail network connecting and facilitating access between Pūhoi village and adjacent Te Muri, Wenderholm and Mahurangi regional parks.’</i>
<b>Other Matters</b>	A number of other changes are required following the findings set out in the Hearings Panel’s substantive report. Those include the following.
<b>Recommendation</b>	Amend Policy 23(e) to read:  <i>e) subject to future Hungry Creek Road improvements enabling the potential safe movement of horse floats and campervans, investigate the extent of stakeholder support for and viability of providing parking for horse floats and/or a small self-contained campervan campground.</i>  Amend Policy 27 (renumbered as Policy 25), Recreation and Use Management, to read:  <i>“Work with stakeholders and mana whenua to develop a walking and mountain biking track network, including where appropriate multi-use tracks, that provides a diverse range of experiences and challenge levels and sufficient length of trail to be a mountain biking destination<sup>1</sup>. Such tracks shall be located and or designed to take into account potential conflicts with other track users, and avoid adverse effects on sites of value to mana whenua, sensitive historic heritage, archaeological sites and ecological areas”.</i>
<b>Recommendation</b>	Amend the ‘Controlled activities’ Section 17.24.5 relating to recreational horse riding as follows:  <i>‘Recreational horse riding will not be permitted until Hungry Creek Road has been upgraded or safe and appropriate alternative access</i>

<sup>1</sup> Destination mountain biking areas are usually areas where riders have to drive or travel to get to from their place of residence. They include basic amenities such as toilets and way finding signage, shared and dedicated mountain biking trails offering a range of trail difficulties and experiences with a minimum ‘ride time’ of 60 to 120 minutes, and a trail network with the ability to host cross-country, enduro, and cyclo-cross mountain biking events.

	<i>has been developed. Initially this will be managed as a discretionary activity until demand establishes a need to develop dedicated horse facilities, at which time it will be managed as a controlled activity on designated routes. Restrictions will apply to protect sites of value to mana whenua, sensitive historic heritage, archaeological sites and ecological areas.'</i>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<p>Amend Policy 22 to include reference to making Hungry Creek Road safe for biking and pedestrians to read:</p> <p><i>'Work with AT and New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA) to promote the upgrading of Hungry Creek Road and the intersection with the State Highway to make it safe for vehicular, pedestrian, equestrian and cycle traffic to the park.'</i></p>