

17.7 Mahurangi Regional Park

17.7.1 Park values

Mahurangi Regional Park is a collection of coastal park locations that define the entrance into the Mahurangi Harbour, totalling 212 hectares. The park consists of three distinct areas with two coastal peninsulas that contain a range of sheltered sandy bays backed by bush covered coastal cliffs and overlooking the scenic Mahurangi Harbour. The park is made up of:

- a) Mahurangi West; consisting of Tungutu Point overlooking the sheltered popular sandy Sullivan’s Bay (Otarawao) and the secluded Mita Bay (Otuawao) to the north, and Cudlip Point overlooking the Te Muri-o-Tarariki Stream to the south and Te Muri Regional Park. The geological exposures around Cudlip Point and the relatively unmodified east coast estuary are of regional significance. The council manages an esplanade reserve along the northern side of the Te Muri Stream. Sullivan’s Bay has a vehicle-based campground and there is a back-country campground at Mita Bay.
- b) Scott Point; lying at the end of the bush covered Te Kapa peninsula in the Mahurangi harbour, contains two baches and the historic Scott Homestead which fronts onto a secluded sandy bay. The peninsula also contains a Department of Conservation reserve and a wharf and boat ramp managed by the local authority that serves recreational boating and the local shellfish industry. The Department of Conservation managed Casnell Island lies just off the headland.
- c) Mahurangi East; which is isolated on the eastern peninsula, separated by the Te Kapa river estuary and the Mahurangi harbour, is accessible only by boat. It contains two baches, one on the west side of the peninsula fronting the tidal Lagoon Bay (Vine House), and one the eastern side in the secluded and sandy Big Bay. It also contains an historic and restored woolshed and a small campground.

Areas of coastal forest dominated by mature pohutukawa and regenerating bush, including kauri, are dotted throughout the park. The best preserved examples are on many of the headlands, such as Cudlip point, and overlooking Sullivan’s Bay. The Mahurangi harbour and coastline hosts a variety of sea birds such as the threatened NZ Dotterel which nests on Mahurangi East, and little blue penguin which nest all along the Mahurangi coast.

The Mahurangi area has a long history of occupation, favoured for its plentiful, seasonal food supplies and natural resources; fishing grounds in the sheltered tidal waters

between the islands and the bay, shellfish gathering on the rocky and sandy shores, eels in the streams, birds in the bush inland, and kumara cultivation on the better drained soils on the slopes and alluvial beach flats. The Mahurangi sea area was also a prized shark fishing ground for tangata whenua of Tāmaki, which were dried for winter food and the collection of shark liver oil (which was mixed with pigment for paint and as a body adornment). The descendants of Ngawhetu and Maki (Ngāti Rongo & Te Kawerau) claim the right of kaitiakitanga over this park land including the fortified pa at Opahi and Otarawhao, the places known as Tungutu, Nokenoke, Orokaraka, Puhoi and the Te Muri.

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 Makoare Ponui¹. 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.

There are a number of off-shore islands close to the Mahurangi coast. These include Te Haupa (Saddle), Motuora, Motutara, Moturekareka and Kawau Islands. The area is very popular for recreational boating and for activities such as sea kayaking. The park receives between 60,000 to 100,000 visits each year. A popular annual event, the Mahurangi Old Timer Regatta for classic vessels, is often held at Sullivan's Bay and the regatta ball held at the Scott Homestead.

The parks are particularly popular with families holidaying in the baches and campgrounds on the parks. Sullivan's Bay is particularly popular, where people compete for space for picnicking, swimming, camping and staying in campervans during the peak of the summer season. In contrast, more remote experiences are offered at Mahurangi East, which is separated by the Te Kapa River estuary and Mahurangi Harbour, and is only accessible by boat.

Mahurangi Regional Park was progressively acquired for regional park purposes from 1966. The park land was developed in the late 1970s and its patterns of use are now well established. The small campground at Sullivan's Bay is very popular and the park is an increasingly popular destination for campervans, which currently park in the foreshore parking area in the main arrival area. There are growing concerns about the visual impact of campervans on the park and views from the sea.

¹ Based on Jade River – a history of Mahurangi by Ron Locker (1994)

17.7.2 Park vision

Mahurangi Regional Park is a set of separate locations on the beautiful Mahurangi Harbour, with isolated destinations only accessible by foot or by boat. They offer superb swimming on sandy beaches, views of the coastline and off-shore islands and unrivalled kayaking and boating. Camping is provided at beachfront camp sites and overnight stays are possible at superbly located baches. The rich Māori and settler history of the Mahurangi is protected, in particular at Scott's Homestead.

17.7.3 Management focus

Over the long term, Mahurangi Regional Park will be managed as a Class II park (refer to section 7.1), with Sullivan's Bay and Scott Point managed as a Special management zones. The park will provide:

- Protection of the outstanding headland landscapes at the mouth of the Mahurangi harbour and enhancement of the coastal forests by protecting and enhancing the biodiversity values of the park including the restoration of the coastal forests containing pohutukawa and stands of mature puriri.
- Opportunities for tangata whenua to strengthen their connection to the land, to provide for their hauora, and to be involved in the park management processes in ways which have particular regard to the practical expression of kaitiakitanga.
- The opportunity to learn about the rich Māori and European history of the locality.
- Opportunities for people to enjoy an overview of the entrance to the scenic Mahurangi harbour, and a key access point to the Mahurangi Harbour for water related recreation, such as sea kayaking, by promoting the park as a maritime-oriented park.
- Opportunities for people to enjoy tramping, walking and picnicking at a number of beach locations.
- Intimate and isolated camping and bach stay opportunities on the park.

Over the next 10 years the management of Mahurangi Regional Park will focus on:

- maintaining, protecting and enhancing the coastal forest, with an emphasis of protecting and replacing pohutukawa, protecting stands of puriri and the habitats and populations of indigenous fauna,
- establishing tangata whenua for the park, identifying, mapping and assessing tangata whenua values associated with the park, and creating processes and opportunities to increase tangata whenua involvement with regional parks,

- enabling people to learn about the rich maritime history of the locality by interpreting the significant heritage stories, including people, places, milestones and events,
- protecting the historic Scott Homestead and establish appropriate community uses for it,
- integrating the management of regional, local authority and Department of Conservation park land and reserves in the locality, and
- rationalising the day use and camping arrangements at Sullivan’s Bay and make provision for campervans in a way that does not detract from the visual amenity of the park and views from the sea, the amenity of the existing campground and the enjoyment of day visitors.

Over the next five years the council will give priority to;

- reviewing the configuration of the arrival area at Sullivan’s Bay and upgrading this; including relocating the campervans at Sullivan’s Bay away from the beach frontage to improve the visual amenity of the park,
- constructing a designated SCC campground, and
- reducing the size of the Sullivan’s Bay campground and developing additional camping opportunities to the west of the existing campground.

17.7.4 Management policies

IMPORTANT: The following management policies must be read in conjunction with the relevant principles, objectives and policies contained in parts 6 to 16 of this plan.

Natural settings

1. Complete the coastal forest enhancement revegetation programme with supplementary planting of pohutukawa, where appropriate, while retaining the views and vistas.
2. Manage recreational activity, especially dogs, in the coastal areas so that they do not unduly disturb the birdlife, such as nesting little blue penguins and NZ dotterels.
3. Maintain pest animal and plant control on the park to prevent incursions onto the off-shore islands in the vicinity.

4. Implement measures in areas of kauri to reduce the risk of spreading kauri dieback, in accordance with section 10.4.4.

Cultural heritage settings

5. Resurvey and update information on archaeological sites on the park land and implement the Archaeological Site Management Actions identified in the Cultural Heritage Inventory.
6. Develop an interpretation trail using existing tracks at Sullivans Bay to assist management and understanding of the cultural heritage significance of the park and surrounding.
7. Manage the historic buildings in accordance with the following heritage conservation plans:
 - a) Sullivan Homestead Conservation Plan 2003,
 - b) Vine House Conservation Plan 2001 (which includes the Lagoon Woolshed),
 - c) Scott Homestead Conservation Plan 2000.

Farmed settings

8. Continue to farm the majority of the park as open pasture on Mahurangi West to recognise its rural heritage, retain key views and vistas, and facilitate recreation and use (including farm experiences).
9. Retain trees in grazed areas and, where necessary, plant further trees for shade and shelter for farm stock consistent with the Regional Parks Livestock Shelter and Shade Management Guidelines.

Recreation and use management

10. Maintain the informal lay-by at Tungutu Point to provide access to a major vantage point.
11. Reconfigure the car parking at the park entrance to Sullivan Bay to improve security, and maintain the service road access to Te Muri Regional Park and facilitate pedestrian access to Te Muri beach.
12. Investigate and if feasible and resources permit, develop an arrival area on the north side of the Te Muri Stream, as shown on Map 7.2 involving;
 - a) a car parking area off the service road

- b) a boardwalk and bridge providing for pedestrian, cycle and light service vehicle access only
 - c) visitor information and emergency phone, and
 - d) public toilets and water supply.
13. Seek amendments to the dog control policies and bylaws to prohibit dogs from Mahurangi East in order to protect breeding shore birds.

Tangata whenua

14. Recognise the special relationship of tangata whenua with the Mahurangi Regional Park through:
- a) acknowledging the relationship through a range of visitor services and infrastructures such as interpretation and tohu tangata whenua,
 - b) consulting on the planning, protection, development and management of the park and the tangata whenua values they contain,
 - c) investigating options with tangata whenua to enable them to exercise their role as kaitiaki over sites of significance, and
 - d) supporting tangata whenua to undertake activities which enable them to provide for their hauora while sustaining the mauri of the park's natural and historic resources (refer to Part 9).
15. Ensure senior staff responsible for managing the park meet at least once a year with tangata whenua appointed kaitiaki (representatives) to discuss the annual work programme and the management actions outlined in Part 9.

Note: For an up to date list of iwi, hapū and/or marae contacts please refer to the council website.

Principal relationships

16. Liaise with Rodney Local Board, adjoining landowners and the local community to ensure the planning, development and management of land adjoining Mahurangi Regional Park:
- a) protects and enhances the park values,
 - b) provides an integrated approach to pest animal and plant control programmes, ecological restoration programmes and recreation activities, and

- c) improves the access to the park.
- 17. In addition to the matters outlined in policy 19, liaise with Rodney Local Board specifically in relation to boating access and dog control.
- 18. Liaise with the licensee of Vine House to ensure it is managed in accordance with the Vine House Conservation Plan 2001; and make it available to the public as part of the bach escape network.
- 19. Support the Ministry of Fisheries, the Department of Conservation and tangata whenua in promoting and enforcing fisheries regulations and enforce any council control of set netting from regional parks (refer to policy 13.6.1.5).

Special management zones

Sullivan's Bay

Sullivan's Bay is the main arrival area on the park. It is a small and constrained bay containing the main car parking, visitor facilities, a campground and the historic Sullivan Homestead which acts as a ranger residence and park depot. It is very popular with campers and as a destination for caravans. There is a need to rationalise the arrangement of facilities within the bay to accommodate the range of activities, and not detract from its natural charm as a beach location, including the visual impacts from the sea.

- 20. Manage Sullivan's Bay as a main arrival area for the park.
- 21. Review, in consultation with key stakeholders, the configuration and use of the arrival area at Sullivan's Bay, in relation to car parking, camping, day use activity and provision for campervans and caravans, as shown on Map 7.2 including:
 - a) rationalising and upgrading the toilets facilities at Sullivan's Bay
 - b) managing the Sullivan's Bay campground and car parking areas to maintain the foreshore areas as open areas for communal use and reduce the visual impacts on the coastline and from the sea
 - c) reducing the capacity of the existing Sullivans Bay campground to 30 persons while investigating options to accommodate additional camping on the hill above the current campground and, once established, reduce the existing Sullivan's Bay campground to 20 persons, and

- d) developing for a SCC campground and in the short term, moving campervans away from the foreshore parking spaces.

Scott Point

Scott Point, at the end of the Te Kapa Peninsula, contains land owned and managed by three public agencies; the council, Department of Conservation and Rodney District Council. It contains a wharf and landing and a boat ramp used by recreational boating and the shell fishing industry. The regional park land also contains the historic Scott Homestead and two houses, Ferguson House and Bailey Cottage, which are available for holiday rental as part of the bach escapes programme. The location acts as an access point for visitors to Mahurangi East.

Scott homestead was built by Thomas Scott jnr. in 1877-81. This former hotel and boarding house dates from a time before road access was developed to the Mahurangi, when the harbour was a hub of shipbuilding and timber milling activity. Today the Scott homestead is one of the heritage icons of the Mahurangi area, with which the local community has developed a strong sense of attachment.

Finding an appropriate use for the Scott Homestead that is consistent both with the retention of its heritage value and setting, while allowing public access to the grounds, has been an ongoing challenge. Fire egress and protection, structural issues and protection of the heritage fabric are amongst the constraints that restrict use of the upper level of the building. The limited car parking capacity in the locality also limits use options.

- 22. Manage Scott Point as an arrival area for Mahurangi East.
- 23. Prepare and implement a conservation plan for the setting of Scott Homestead, including the heritage fruit trees associated with the homestead.
- 24. Manage the Scott Homestead in accordance with the conservation plan and investigate appropriate public use for the homestead, including its possible use for overnight accommodation.
- 25. Formalise, in consultation with Rodney Local Board and Department of Conservation, the integrated management of the Department of Conservation land (including Casnell Island), local reserves at Scott Point and the use of Mahurangi East, with respect to pest animal and plant control, and the provision of recreational opportunities.

26. Investigate, in association with Rodney Local Board, the provision of additional car parking and toilet facilities to meet use at Scott Point and to service the Scott Homestead.
27. Investigate removing the aging pine trees on the regional park land along the western side of Ridge Road and replace with appropriate species, following consultation with the Heritage New Zealand regarding archaeological sites in the area.
28. Maintain public walking access along the beach to Scott Homestead and sign post and improve walking access between the Ferguson house, Bailey Cottage, the Scott Homestead and the adjoining Mahurangi Scenic Reserve (DOC).

17.7.5 Recreation and use activities

Permitted activities

The table below shows the permitted activities that are allowed on Mahurangi Regional Park, as outlined in section 13.3. It also outlines any permanent restrictions that will be applied to the permitted activities for this park. The council may also apply temporary restrictions to any permitted activities (refer to policy 13.3.1.2). Any temporary restrictions will be advertised in park brochures, signs or using other media.

If an activity is not listed in this table, it may be allowed as a controlled (see table below) or discretionary activity in terms of section 13.5, unless they are prohibited in terms of section 13.6 of this plan.

Permitted activities	Status and restrictions
Barbecues	Permitted at either facilities provided at Sullivan’s Bay or portable gas barbecues subject to fire restrictions that may apply from time to time.
Boat access	A boat launching ramp and trailer parking is available at Scott Point. Small craft, such as kayaks, can be hand launched at Sullivan Bay. Navigational Safety Bylaw 2008 applies.

Permitted activities	Status and restrictions
Dogs	<p>Dogs are permitted on a lead;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) On the Cudlip Point Loop Track. b) On Mita Bay beach and the coastal area around Opahi Bay. Dogs can only access Mita Bay by boat, or by foot from Opahi Bay. c) At Scott Point and adjoining beaches: except between 9am and 7pm from the first Sunday in October to the 3rd Sunday in March. d) Mahurangi East park land and adjoining beaches. <p>Temporary restrictions may apply.</p> <p>Dogs are prohibited from park land at Sullivans Bay and Te Muri estuary and foreshore and adjoining beaches at all times.</p> <p>Council will seek to have these policies amended (refer to policy 16 above).</p> <p>Dogs are subject to local authority dog control policies and bylaws which are subject to change. Reference should be made to the council's website.</p>
Informal individual, family or group activities.	<p>Informal groups are limited to 75 persons in order to manage conflict with other recreation activities. Groups larger than 75 must obtain a discretionary activity consent.</p>
Recreational cycling	<p>Permitted on designated poled routes across farm land and park roads (refer to Maps 7.1 and 7.2) but temporary restrictions may apply on sites of significance to tangata whenua, sensitive archaeological sites and ecological areas; or to protect park values and to enable park operations such as pest control and lambing. Phytosanitary measures may be required when using tracks within kauri zones.</p>
Walking, tramping, running and orienteering	<p>Permitted on designated tracks (refer to Maps 7.1 and 7.2) and council approved orienteering course) and open pasture areas but temporary restrictions may apply to: protect sites of significance to tangata whenua, sensitive</p>

Permitted activities	Status and restrictions
	archaeological sites and ecological areas; or to enable park operations such as lambing and pest control. Phytosanitary measures may be required when using tracks within kauri zones.

Controlled activities

The table below shows the controlled activities that are allowed on Mahurangi Regional Park, as outlined in section 13.4. It also outlines where information on permanent restrictions to controlled activities can be found. The council may also apply temporary restrictions to any controlled activities (refer to policy 13.4.1.2). Any temporary restrictions will be advertised in park brochures, signs or using other media.

Controlled activities require prior booking through the council.

If an activity is not listed in this table, it may be allowed as a discretionary activity in terms of section 13.5, unless they are prohibited in section 13.6 of this plan.

Controlled activities	Description of site (if applicable)	Restrictions and conditions
Baches	Scott Point: Baileys Cottage (6 people) and Ferguson House (8 people). Mahurangi East: Vine House (8 people) and the Big Bay Bach (6 people).	Conditions on booking confirmation. Note the Vine House is available for hire by the general public and is under licence to the Auckland Canoe Club.
Campervans and caravans	Sullivan's Bay arrival area (10 vehicles) until a SCC Vehicle Campground has been constructed with capacity for no more than 20 vehicles. SCC campervans and caravans will not be allowed	Requires self-containment certificates in car parks. Further conditions on booking confirmation or camping passes.

	along the foreshore in the Sullivan's Bay car parking area.	
Camping	Vehicle based campground: Sullivan's Bay (30 people), Back-country campgrounds: Mita Bay (40 people) and Lagoon Bay (20 people).	Conditions on booking confirmation or camping passes.
Meeting venues	The Scott Homestead and grounds are available for meetings, weddings and other celebrations, by arrangement with the council	Listed in Recreation Conditions on booking confirmation. Note: special conditions apply to the Scott Homestead because of its heritage values. 100 people can be booked in during the period March to November inclusive and 30 people during the peak summer period December to February inclusive.

Leases and licenses

The table below identifies the leases and licenses operating on Mahurangi Regional Park when this management plan was adopted.

Licences may be surrendered and new ones may be created during the term of this plan. For an up to date list of leases and licences please refer to please refer to the council website.

Holder	Type	Expiry date	Notes
Auckland Canoe Club	Licence to occupy Vine House	2014	Occupation limited to specific days of the year.

17.7.6 Monitoring

The council will monitor aspects of Mahurangi Regional Park in accordance with section 7.7. In addition to the standard monitoring programme, the council will undertake specific monitoring as follows:

1. Monitor the viability of the coastal birdlife, such as NZ dotterels and little blue penguins.